

GREAT MEN AND WOMEN OF INDIA

**PUBLICATIONS DIVISION
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

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Price : Rs. 12-50

**Published by the Director, Publications Division,
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India,
Patiala House, New Delhi-110001**

Sales Empore • Publications Division

Super Bazar, Connaught Circus, New Delhi-110001

Commerce House, Currimbhoy Road, Ballard Pier, Bombay-400038

8, Esplanade East, Calcutta-700069

LL Auditorium, Anna Salai, Madras-600002

Bihar State Cooperative Bank Building, Ashoka Rajpath, Patna-800004

Press Road, Trivandrum 695001

10-B Station Road, Lucknow-226001

**Printed by A. K. Chatterjee at Jnanodaya Press,
55B Kabi Sukanta Sarani, Calcutta-700085**

ABOUT THIS BOOK

India has been blessed with a number of great men and women all through the centuries. They appeared in all parts of the country and left an indelible imprint on our history and culture. Their influence sometimes extended beyond the frontiers of India.

In this collection, we offer our young readers short life sketches of thirty-two eminent personalities who awakened the people, shaped their destiny and contributed to the composite culture of the land.

CONTENTS

1. Gautama, The Buddha	...	...	1
2. Ashoka The Great	...	...	7
3. Lalitaditya	...	...	14
4. Shankaracharya	...	...	19
5. Kalhana	...	...	25
6. Hazrat Moin-ud-din Chishti	...	...	30
7. Hazrat Nizam-ud-din Aulia	...	...	35
8. Sant Kabir	...	...	39
9. Amir Khusro	...	...	46
10. Lal Ded	...	...	49
11. Nund Rishi	...	...	54
12. Zain-ul-Abidin	...	...	59
13. Guru Nanak	...	...	65
14. Habba Khatoon	...	...	71
15. Akbar	...	...	77
16. Tipu Sultan	...	...	82
17. Tyagaraja	...	...	92
18. Rammohun Roy	...	...	99
19. Mirza Ghalib	...	...	103
20. Zorawar Singh	...	...	108

21.	Sayyid Ahmed Khan	...	...	113
22.	Dadabhai Naoroji	...	...	119
23.	Bal Gangadhar Tilak	...	...	126
24.	Jagdish Chandra Bose	...	...	135
25.	Rabindranath Tagore	...	...	141
26.	Mahatma Gandhi	...	...	145
27.	Vallabhbhai Patel	...	...	153
28.	Sarojini Naidu	...	...	158
29.	Abul Kalam Azad	...	...	163
30.	Dr. B. R. Ambedkar	...	...	170
31.	Jawaharlal Nehru	...	...	185
32.	Subhas Chandra Bose	...	...	191

GAUTAMA THE BUDDHA

MORE than 2500 years ago, there lived a Kshatriya king named Suddhodana who ruled over the little kingdom of Kapilavastu on the India-Nepal border. He had a son named Siddhartha who later came to be known as the Buddha and is regarded as one of the greatest luminaries of the world.

Siddhartha was born in Lumbini, situated near the border between India and Nepal. Gautama was his family name. His mother, Mahamaya, passed away when he was only seven days old. The child was brought to Kapilavastu and was nurtured by Mahaprajapati Gautami who was Mahamaya's sister and Suddhodana's second wife. His father bestowed all his loving attention and care on the child.

It is said that Asita, an old seer, went to the royal palace to see the new-born prince. Looking at the baby, he predicted that the child was destined to be a Mahatma or a great man. Saying so, he laughed, but a moment later tears trickled down his face. Those present were surprised at this and asked him why he had both laughed and wept at the same time. He explained : "I had laughed because I was delighted at the thought that the child would renounce the world, found a new religion and be a saviour of mankind. I shed tears because I would not live long enough to see the future greatness of the child realised." Suddhodana was not very happy about the prophecy because he wanted his child to succeed him as the king of Kapilavastu.

The child, Gautama, was very sweet and charming as well as extremely intelligent. He lived in a big palace in the midst of beautiful gardens. There was nothing he wished that

he did not get. As he grew up, he was taught reading, writing, music, riding, swimming and hunting. He knew well how to use the sword and pull the bow. He trained himself in everything a prince ought to know.

Deep inside his heart, however, Gautama longed for solitude. He was a dreamer by temperament. Often he left his associates in the midst of sports and wandered away to seclusion, absorbed in deep thought. Once his companions found him missing for pretty long. They searched and searched for him until at last they found him sitting in meditation under a rose-apple tree. Gautama had a kind and tender heart and could not bear the pain and suffering of others. When out hunting, his heart would suffer in sympathy for the innocent birds and animals and he would not kill them. Once he found a wounded swan in a corner of his lovely garden and was overwhelmed by its agony. All this was noticed by his father and it made him very sad. He tried to keep Gautama away from the unhappiness and miseries of life.

Gautama grew up into a handsome youth, and was married to Yashodhara, a beautiful princess, whom he dearly loved. Together, they lived blissfully. He was given three palaces for the three seasons—winter, summer and monsoon. There were dancing, music, games and hunting to entertain him. He had all the pleasures and luxuries that a royal life could offer. In time, he was blessed with a son who was christened Rahul.

All this, however, did not make him really happy. He longed for something else. The prince once expressed a desire to see the city and to know how the people lived. As he rode in his chariot, he saw a tottering old man with his back bent, leaning on a stick in his hand, his eyes sunk, his teeth all gone, and his hair turned all grey. The wretched condition of the man set him thinking. He thought that his own plight

in old age would not be very different. He became pensive and sad at the thought that all living beings were doomed to suffer from old age.

On another occasion, he came across a man who was suffering from a terrible disease. He realised that a man might suffer from a disease any time in his life—in childhood, youth or old age. Sometime later, he saw a dead body being taken to the cremation ground, followed by wailing mourners. He felt that all men must die one day.

He now began to brood over the spectacle of old age, sickness and death which made him increasingly distressed. He came to the conclusion that human life was full of pain, suffering, sorrow and misery and no one could escape them.

One day Gautama happened to meet a wandering ascetic. He asked him why he had taken to that life. The ascetic replied that he had renounced the world, because he wanted to free himself from the miseries of life.

Gautama now saw that some people were trying to find a way out of human misery. This created an intense urge in him to find out why there was suffering in the world and how man could free himself from it. In the prime of his youth, he made up his mind to give up all the comforts and pleasures of princely life and adopt the life of a mendicant in quest of Truth. He was only twenty-nine at that time.

At midnight, when every one in the palace was in deep slumber, he rose from his couch and called his charioteer to fit out his favourite horse, Kanthaka. He had a last, lingering glimpse of his beloved wife, Princess Yashodhara, who was fast asleep, with baby Rahul next to her. He softly walked out, mounted his horse and rode away. This was the Great Renunciation.

He rode towards a forest all night long and the next morning he reached a place far, far away from his father's

GREAT MEN AND WOMEN OF INDIA

kingdom. He dismounted from his horse, cast off his princely attire, cut off his hair, wore a yellow robe and marched alone in search of the secret of happiness. He began the life of a wandering ascetic.

He met some of the most famous religious teachers of the time and learned something from them, but he was still not satisfied. He walked on and on and reached the forest of Uruvela near Gaya in Bihar. Here, he practised rigorous penance for six long years. He observed severe fasts and inflicted severe pain on his body. In the process, he was reduced to a skeleton. He, however, did not gain the Truth he was seeking. He found that self-torture was not the right way. He took food again. He now began to meditate deeply under a *pipal* tree near Gaya. At last one day he suddenly attained supreme knowledge. Thereafter, he came to be known as the Buddha or the Enlightened One.

The Buddha, who was then thirty-five years of age, was eager to share the light of knowledge with humanity. He proceeded to Sarnath near Varanasi and began to preach his new faith called Buddhism. The Buddha taught the four Noble Truths. They were : 1. Life is full of suffering ; 2. The cause of this suffering is that man is selfish and has desires ; 3. Suffering ceases when the desire ceases; 4. Desire can be eliminated by following the Eight-fold Path which consisted of Right Faith, Right Resolve, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right Living, Right Effort, Right Remembrance and Right Meditation.

The Buddha concluded from his own experience that one should neither indulge too much in the pleasures of life nor torture oneself too much. These were extremes and did not bring happiness and should, therefore, be avoided. There was a Middle Path which led to knowledge and happiness. The Buddha said : One should learn self-control ; if someone is

angry, one should not be angry in return but be kind instead; one should not have any hatred or malice towards others; one should show compassion, love and kindness to all living beings; one should not lie, steal, kill or drink; one should have a good heart and mind which will manifest itself in good thoughts, good words and good deeds ; and one should lead a simple and pure life. That is the way to achieve happiness.

He went from place to place teaching the people the way to happiness. Disciples began to gather round him and thousands of people became his followers. His father, wife and son also embraced Buddhism.

Extremely gentle and tolerant, full of human sympathy and kindness, universal love and compassion, the Buddha preached his *Dharma* to the rich and the poor, the high and the low alike. He said : "It is not by birth, but through one's acts, that one becomes a Brahman or an untouchable". He said that all the castes united in his religion as did the rivers in the ocean. The Apostle took his gospel to the doors of the people and taught them in their own language and in a manner that was at once simple and touching.

For forty-five years, the Master preached sermons on universal love, morality and purity, leading people to the path of righteousness.

The Buddha died at Kusinara (modern Kushinagar in U. P.), about 190 kilometres (120 miles) from Varanasi (Banaras) at the age of eighty.

The Buddha called Kashmir "the land of blue forests." He is said to have predicted that a disciple of Anand, his constant companion, would propagate his religion in Kashmir. Later, Kashmir became a great centre of Buddhism and Buddhist learning. Several Buddhist scholars lived and studied there. The third Buddhist Council was held in Kashmir. A number of Buddhist scholars from Kashmir went

beyond the borders of India, especially to China, to spread the sacred message of the Buddha.

Most of the people in Ladakh, one of the divisions of Jammu and Kashmir State, are Buddhists. There are a number of Buddhist monasteries and priests there.

Millions the world over follow Buddhism even today and draw inspiration from his life and work.

ASHOKA THE GREAT

AN eminent American historian was once asked to name half a dozen men among those who rose above the common level, who deserved to be called great. He turned the question over for a day or two and then gave a list of six names.* Ashoka, the Mauryan Emperor of India, was one of them. Others in the list were Jesus, the Buddha, Aristotle, Roger Bacon and Abraham Lincoln. Down the road of history, one would come across a large number of emperors who have battled for fame, or who have sought to command unmatched power, splendour and influence. Yet Ashoka was the only king who found a place in that list. The historian argued that this was so not because he was a victorious conqueror, but because he voluntarily abandoned war and devoted himself to peace, humanity and the betterment of his subjects. Further amplifying, the historian said : "These six men stood on the corners of history. Events hinged on them. The current of human thought was freer and clearer because they had lived and worked. They took little from the world and left it much. They did not get; they gave."

When he ascended the throne of Magadha in 273 B. C., Ashoka was no different from his father, Bindusara, and his grandfather, Chandragupta, who had founded the dynasty. In the fashion of the earlier Mauryan kings, Ashoka assumed the regal title of "Devanamapiya Piyadasi" (or "Priyadarsini") and increased his power and splendour. He raised a vast army consisting of elephants, chariots, cavalry and infantry,

*Related in *The Man Nobody Knows* by Bruce Barton

6,00,000 men in all. With the help of this huge force, he vanquished many a kingdom and humbled many a king throughout the length and breadth of the country. And then, in 261 B. C., Ashoka set out to conquer the last remaining independent kingdom in northern India. This was Kalinga (modern Orissa), a wild, wooded country on the east coast, between the Godavari and Mahanadi rivers. The army of Kalinga fought fiercely, but could not hold ground against the superior tactics and strength of the invading forces. Ashoka's troops were said to have behaved with great cruelty in this war; 125,000 people were taken prisoners, 100,000 were slain and many times that number were rendered orphan, destitute and homeless. No mercy was shown and neither old people nor women nor were little children spared.

Militarily, it was a great conquest which made Ashoka the master of the whole of non-Tamil India. His domain now extended from the land of the Yavanas, Kambojas and Gandharas in the Kabul Valley and some adjoining mountain territory to the country of the Andhras in the Godavari-Krishna basin and the district of Isila in the north of Mysore, and from Sopara and Girnar in the west to Dhauli and Janagada in the east. His Kingdom included the vales of Kashmir and Nepal and the plains of North Bengal and East Bengal.

The battle of Kalinga proved to be a turning point in the life of Ashoka and produced results which had far-reaching consequences in the history of India and the whole of the eastern world. Just about the time of this campaign, Ashoka made the acquaintance of a Buddhist teacher named Upagupta. Upagupta instructed the emperor in the teachings of the Buddha, and he especially pointed out to him the doctrine of *Ahimsa* or non-violence. Life was a sacred trust and it was the greatest sin to deprive anyone, man or animal, of this. The teaching, and the sight of the terrible misery and bloodshed in the

Kalinga war filled Ashoka with remorse at the thought of the brutalities committed by his army. He vowed that he would never go to war again and that, in future, his war-drum would sound no more in this land. The only drum would be that which proclaimed the *Dharma* or Law of piety. "If a hundredth, nay a thousandth part of the persons who were then slain, carried away captive, or done to death, were now to suffer the same fate, it would be a matter of remorse to us", he declared.

Ashoka, hereafter, became intensely devoted to the practice of *Dharma* (morality and piety), to the love of *Dharma* and to the instruction of the people in *Dharma*. There came about a radical change in his foreign policy. The emperor eschewed military conquests involving slaughter and deportation of people and evolved a policy of *dharmavijaya*, or conquest by piety in place of the old conquest by bows and arrows. Shortly after the Kalinga war, he became a lay-worshipper (*upasaka*) of the Buddha and went out to *Sambodhi*, or Bodhi-Gaya in Bihar, and established close relations with the Buddhist *Sangha* or order of monks. He undertook "tours of morality" (*dharmayatra*) in place of "pleasure tours" (*viharayatra*) of his ancestors. In the course of these tours, he visited the people, the highest and the lowliest, and instructed them in *Dharma*. The law, as taught by the royal preacher to his people, was simple to understand. True religion, he said, consisted in observing four great rules: honouring one's father and mother; liberality to friends, relations, holy men and Brahmins; abstention from the slaughter of any living creature; and kindness to slaves and servants. The Law of Piety, Ashoka declared, lay "in good deeds, compassion, liberality, truthfulness and purity." Above all things, he enjoined men to observe strict religious toleration. "A man must not revere his own religion and condemn that of his neighbour.

Other people's beliefs deserve respect for one reason or another."

At the end of "256 nights" spent on tour, the emperor was satisfied that the people in India had turned to morality and piety. But his dominions were vast and he realised that, with all his zeal, he alone would not be able to carry the message of *Dharma* to the people in the remotest corners of his empire. He, therefore, ordered all his commissioners and district officers to publish scripts on morality and set out on tour every five years to give instructions in morality as well as for ordinary official duties. In order that the message might reach everyone, Ashoka's edicts were engraved on rocks and existing stone pillars. New "pillars of morality" were set up in places where they were most likely to attract the attention of passers-by. Special officers were appointed to look after the welfare of people belonging to all sects and classes, including princes and princesses of the blood, prisoners in jails, ordinary householders and their servants as well as homeless ascetics.

It was characteristic of Ashoka that he always practised what he preached. He assumed the life of an ordinary monk or *Bhikkhu*, gave up the splendours and luxuries of the court and was content with a single yellow robe, a needle to mend it, a razor to shave his head and beard, a strainer lest he should destroy life in his drinking water, and a begging bowl. In the eleventh year of his reign, he stopped the royal hunts. The slaughter of animals to make curries in the imperial kitchen was discontinued and sacrificial slaughter of animals was also abolished. He never spared himself. He said: "I must work for the public benefit. For what do I toil? For the discharge of my debt to all living beings, so that I may make them happy in this world, and sure of heaven in the next." He provided medical care both for men and animals. Under his orders, reservoirs of water were constructed at various places,

trees were planted and wells dug along the roads for the comfort of travellers, and resthouses and hospitals were built. Special measures were taken for the protection of the poor, the backward jungle tribes and the downtrodden castes. The Queen and the princess were encouraged to distribute alms to the poor and to make gifts of cave-dwellings to the homeless. One of his queens, Karuvaki, seems to have excelled others in these acts of charity.

The reference to cave-dwellings affords us a glimpse into another side of the Emperor's activity. Ashoka was a great builder; he introduced the use of stone and his workmen learnt to carve and polish stone pillar in a most exquisite manner. In pataliputra, the capital, he constructed a splendid palace, besides numerous mounds, monasteries and temples. He also built monasteries, *viharas* and temples all over his kingdom.

Ashoka's rule in Kashmir is a landmark in the history of this region which was then governed through a deputy who had his seat at Taxila, according to the eminent Kashmir historian, Al-Haj Dr. G. M. D. Sufi. Ashoka built the original town of Srinagar, at a site about 6 kilometres (4 miles) above the existing capital and which is now occupied by a village called Pandrethan. Ashoka's laws of piety and morality, says Dr. Sufi, "deeply affected the Kashmiri character. The ordinary patience that the Kashmiri shows under the severest visitations of nature, such as cholera and earthquake, is clearly traceable to this early Buddhist influence. The outside appearance of most of the present-day Muslim shrines is not unlike that of a Buddhist pagoda, though all details are entirely Saracenic...."

Ashoka was not content to preach his new-found faith in his own domain. The new foreign policy he adopted was one of peace and forbearance, of friendly conquest by morality.

The "reverberation of the war-drum" (*bheri ghosha*) was to become "the reverberation of the law" (*dharma-ghosha*). Not satisfied with what he did himself, he sent out Buddhist missionaries to his Greek friends in the distant West, and to the Eastern countries. He sent his son and daughter, Mahendra and Sanghamitra, to Ceylon with a branch of the sacred Bodhi tree. Devanampiya Tissa, the ruler of that island-kingdom, was converted and his example was followed by his subjects. Missionaries were also sent to Lower Burma, Sumatra and some adjoining islands. Ashoka is said to have made a spiritual conquest of many realms.

In 249 B.C., the twenty-third year of his reign, Ashoka made a pilgrimage to the holy places, accompanied by his teacher Upagupta. He visited the Lumbini Garden where the Buddha was born, and Kapilavastu where the Blessed One spent his boyhood. From there, he went to the Deer Garden near Varanasi where the Buddha preached his first sermon; Sravasti where he spent so many years; Gaya where he received his Enlightenment; and lastly, Kusinara where he attained *Nirvana* and was cremated. At all these places, Ashoka built lofty stone pillars with lion capitals, and established colleges for the study and teaching of the Law of Piety. On his return, he called a council which drew up a correct list of Buddhist scriptures.

Shortly before his death, Ashoka retired from worldly life and left his kingdom to his two grandsons. He passed away an ascetic in 232 B.C.

Ashoka is indeed one of the most remarkable personalities in world history. He was tireless in his exertions, and unflagging in his zeal. All his acts were directed to the promotion of the physical, spiritual and moral welfare of his people whom he

called his children. It was entirely due to his energy and initiative that Buddhism—a local sect of the Ganga valley—was turned into a world religion. He was great in war, but far greater in peace. There is no doubt that his name will inspire all those who seek to make the world a better and happier place for mankind in the time to come.

LALITADITYA

AMONG all the States of India, Kashmir has the unique distinction of having a connected chronicle from the dawn of history. The number of Kashmir's rulers known to us is legion. Accordingly, Kashmir's great historian, Kalhana, entitled his well-known history of Kashmir as *Rajatarangini* or 'River of Kings'. The greatest among the rulers mentioned by Kalhana was Lalitaditya. Known also as 'Muktapida' he ruled from 724 to 760 A.D.

Lalitaditya was the youngest of the three sons of Pratapaditya, a good and virtuous ruler whose reign was marked by peace and prosperity. Kashmir had intimate social and commercial relations with the rest of India in those early days, even though the means of communication were difficult and risky. People from different parts of the country came to Kashmir for learning, for pilgrimage and for commerce. King Lalitaditya's mother hailed from Rohtak in Haryana.

Not much is known about the early life of the prince whose reign was to be the golden age in Kashmir's long history. He had, however, the advantage of witnessing three different regimes in succession—those of his illustrious father and his two elder brothers, Chandrapida and Tarapida. Chandrapida was himself a model ruler. This gave Lalitaditya a thorough schooling in statecraft and administration.

Kashmir was a powerful kingdom when Lalitaditya came to the throne. According to the Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsang, who had visited the valley some decades earlier, the districts of Taxila (Rawalpindi), Urasa (Hazara) and Simhapura (Attock region)—all of them now in Pakistan—as also Rajouri and

Poonch were under the rule of the King of Kashmir. Lalitaditya's dominions extended over a much wider area. His conquering expeditions ranged from Bengal in the east to Gujarat in the west, and from Deccan in the south to the Central Asian deserts in the north.

Among the more notable victories of Lalitaditya, mention may be made of his success against Yashovarman, who ruled the fertile tracts of land watered by the Yamuna and the Ganga with his capital at Kanauj. Lalitaditya's victories over Bengal and Gujarat are borne out by the fact that the rulers of both lived at his court in Kashmir. Even more remarkable were his victories over the Tibetans, the Dards and the still more distant and difficult Kambojas (inhabiting eastern Afghanistan) and the Tukharians who inhabited Badakshan and other areas of the Upper Oxus Valley. According to the Chinese annals, the Kashmir ruler had defeated the Tibetans several times, and, in alliance with a Central Indian king, obviously Yashovarman or his successor, had blocked all the five routes into their country.

Lalitaditya's victory over the Tukharians is unprecedented in the annals of India and the people of Kashmir justly took pride in it. We have the testimony of the well-known Arab writer, Alberuni, that the Kashmiris, in his time, celebrated on the second of *Chaitra* the signal victory which their great king had won over these distant people in the far north.

Kashmir witnessed a period of glory and unprecedented constructional activity in Lalitaditya's time. The vast treasures which he had brought from the subdued regions were spent in building new towns and splendid edifices. The ruins of some of these are still extant, twelve centuries after they were put up. These testify to the beauty and grandeur of the architectural skill of their builders.

The foremost among all his foundations was the new capital

of Parihasapora, near the confluence of the Vitasta (Jhelum) and its principal tributary, the Sindh. It was built upon an extensive *karewa* or flat, loamy table-land commanding a panoramic view of the valley and the mountains surrounding it. The *karewa* stands high above the level of floods, but had the waters of the Vitasta and Sindh washing its feet. In this town, situated about 18 kilometres to the north-west of Srinagar, the great king put up some of the most massive buildings ever built in Kashmir.

A large number of religious and secular structures were erected by Lalitaditya in the old capital and other towns. The best known among them is the celebrated temple of Martand, near the shrine of the same name. Though the temple is in ruins now, it still evokes admiration both for its imposing dimensions and for the excellence of its architectural design and decoration. Situated on elevated ground, it is built of immense rectilinear blocks of limestone. The temple ruins are noted for their massiveness and grace.

Though the military exploits of Lalitaditya have deservedly received greater prominence, his achievements in other fields have also been significant. We have already referred to some of the monumental buildings put up by him. He was also responsible for a number of public works undertaken for the benefit of his people.

Floods used to be the bane of Kashmir. Year after year, the water-level in the river would rise after the rains, and the poor Kashmiri peasant would helplessly see the fruits of his labour washed away along with his mud hut. Lalitaditya constructed a number of new towns. These were all on high ground and, therefore, secure from the ravages of floods. He also erected *bunds* or embankments around low-lying lands, thus protecting them from floods. Measures for bringing water to arid tracts like *karewas* were also undertaken.

Kalhana mentions that he erected a number of water-wheels for raising and conveying water to *Chakradara*—a flat table-land near Bijbihara. A number of irrigation canals were also constructed.

Like Ashoka, Lalitaditya was a tolerant ruler and his patronage was extended to all the faiths prevalent in Kashmir and its dependencies. Though himself a Hindu, he had equal regard for Buddhism. He constructed a large number of temples dedicated to the Buddha and to Shiva, Vishnu and other Hindu gods. He put up a number of *viharas* and monasteries which flourished as seats of learning.

Lalitaditya was a truly enlightened monarch. He encouraged the arts and learning. Many artists, sculptors, builders, writers and statesmen flocked to his court. Kalhana records that "he collected from different countries, various wise men as the wind collects masses of full-blown flowers from the trees". These experts vied with each other in putting up magnificent structures and otherwise adding to the learning, beauty and prosperity of Kashmir. His Chief Minister, Chankuna, who hailed from Tukharistan, put up a number of Buddhist structures. One of them was known as *Chanku-navihara* after him.

Lalitaditya was lucky in having as his ministers and counsellors persons who were both loyal and wise. Though they were prepared to lay down their lives for him, yet they would not carry out his orders blindly if these were not in the public interest. Once at Parihasapura, under the influence of wine, Lalitaditya ordered the destruction of the old capital Pravarapura (corresponding to that portion of the city of Srinagar which lies between Zainakadal and the foot of Hari Parbat) built about two centuries earlier. This was an order from their king, but they decided to disregard it as it was given under the influence of liquor. To satisfy his momentary whim,

however, they got a few hay ricks set on fire in a nearby village. In the morning, when the king rose from his sleep, he remembered his order of the previous night and felt deep remorse. Like a guilty person he dared not look his ministers in the face. Seeing his grief and remorse, the ministers told him what they had done to save the old town from destruction. Lalitaditya felt greatly relieved and congratulated his ministers on their sagacity. He instructed them never to carry out orders given by him when he was drunk.

Lalitaditya, the great conqueror, met his end in the course of a military expedition in the north. Thus came to a close the most glorious era in Kashmir's history.

SHANKARACHARYA

EVEN with the most modern and fast-moving means of transport, automobiles, railway trains and aeroplanes and all the facilities and amenities that go a long way in making travel both quick and comfortable, how many of us have seen the whole of India ? There is a vast network of roads and railway lines with numerous bridges which enable us to cross thick forests, high mountains and turbulent rivers with ease and make any part of the country readily accessible. But, how many of us have visited the four corners of our country ?

This query may prove rather embarrassing to most of us even in this 20th century for the simple reason that, in nine cases out of ten, the answer is likely to be in the negative. Yet, there had been a great man, not 10 or 20 years but about 1,200 years back when there were none of the things mentioned above, who traversed the length and breadth of this vast country on foot in a very short span of life. This great man was the greatest Sanskrit scholar and philosopher that the country has produced. He is well-known to all by the name of Adi Shankaracharya.

In our country, it is not the emperors or the warriors, but the sages and the spiritual leaders who led a life of self denial and renunciation that are held in the highest veneration. This great teacher was the chief exponent of the Advaita philosophy, the doctrine of monism which occupies a foremost place in our cultural life even today. This fact convincingly proves his remarkable ability, both as a practical philosopher and an organiser.

Shankaracharya was born in 788 A.D. in a small village,

named Kaladi, situated on the banks of the river, Purna, in Kerala. His father's name was Shivaguru and his mother's Aryamba. Both were ardent devotees of Lord Shiva. Believing that he was born because of the grace of Lord Shiva, his parents named him Shankar. Unfortunately, his father expired when he was only three years old and he was brought up by his mother.

Shankar was a precocious child. He was gifted with a sharp intellect and a remarkable memory. In his childhood, his mother used to narrate stories from the epics and the *Puranas*. These, the child Shankar would memorise within no time. At the age of five she sent him to a 'gurukul' where he made rapid progress in his studies of the *Vedas* and other scriptures. After two years, he returned home with a very wide vision of life.

It is worth noting that even at the tender age of eight, he had a spiritual bent of mind. Deeply impressed by the intellect and learning of Shankar, King Rajashekhar of Cochin offered him riches and a position of honour at his court. The spirit of renunciation was, however, so dominant in Shankar that he politely declined. Neither riches nor honour nor family life held any attraction for him. The pursuit of knowledge was the 'mission' of his life and for that he had chosen a life of asceticism.

His mother, a widow with Shankar as her only son, naturally enough wanted him to marry, have a family and take care of her during her old age. One can well imagine the reaction of his mother when he told her of his intention to take to 'sanyas' and sought her permission. She was stunned and after recovering from the initial shock, she declined to agree. According to the *Shastras*, a Hindu could not take to 'sanyas' unless his mother gave her free consent. Thus, he was in a quandary. Legend, however, tells us that a peculiar situation

came to his rescue. One day, while he was taking bath in the river, a crocodile caught hold of his foot. Shankar tried hard to free himself, all in vain. The crocodile would not release his foot and started dragging him into deep water. Thereupon, Shankar cried for help and told his mother that the crocodile would spare his life if she granted him permission to take to 'sanyas'. Seeing the son's life in danger the mother reluctantly gave him permission. Only then, it is said, did the crocodile release his foot from its jaws.

It was not an unmixed feeling of happiness for Shankar. He was happy because he was now free to do as he pleased and sorry because he had to take leave of his mother. He, however, consoled and assured her that he would come to see her whenever she was in need. He then took her blessings and left home in search of a 'guru'.

Wandering about, he reached the *Ashram* of Sri Govindbhagavatapad, the chief disciple of Sri Gaudapad. Deeply impressed by Shankar's spirit of renunciation, his quest for knowledge and his sharp intellect, Sri Govindbhagavatapad readily accepted him as his disciple. He initiated Shankar into the delight of seeking *atmagnan*—the knowledge of the self. He stayed in the *ashram* for three years. Fully satisfied by the progress made by his eminent disciple, Sri Govindbhagavatapad conferred on him the title of 'Acharya.' Thus, Shankar became Shankaracharya at the age of eleven.

His 'guru' then enjoined upon him to proceed to Varanasi (Kashi) to spread the message of Vedanta. The city was both a place of pilgrimage and a very important centre of learning. Eminent scholars, representing various systems of philosophy, used to participate in the synods held there.

Reaching Varanasi, Shankaracharya started giving discourses on the Vedanta philosophy and participated in the debates and discussions held in the religious congregations.

Very soon his fame spread far and wide and he earned the foremost place amongst the saints and scholars. Everyone was deeply impressed by his erudition, oratory and magnificent power of reasoning. He was a very able debater and all those who came and discussed with him went back fully convinced of the supremacy of Shankar's *advaita* philosophy.

To be able to assess Shankaracharya's contribution to our cultural life, it is necessary to take into account the prevalent condition of the society. The history of all the religions of the world tells us that although each one of them is founded on very noble principles, in the course of time there develops a gulf between what the followers of a particular religion preach and what they practise. Buddhism which had become a widely accepted religion because of its dynamism and popular appeal and had remained so for about one thousand years, was certainly no exception to this. In the process of degeneration, the Buddhist *viharas* (monasteries) became centres of vested interests and corruption. The followers forgot the teachings of Lord Buddha who had said that good conduct, shorn of any expectation of deriving material benefit, was its own reward. Brahminism too had become equally degenerate. Both had developed degrading practices. There were no less than seventy-two different schools of thought. There was spiritual and moral chaos, and hypocrisy and disruptive forces were rampant. The society badly needed a person who could set things right and guide the people on the correct course.

Destiny chose Shankaracharya for this stupendous task and the world knows how admirably well he performed it. He wrote commentaries on *Brahmasutras*, *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita*. The hymns he wrote, 'Anandalahari' and 'Saundaryalahari', are known both for their intense devotional feeling and great literary value. He had completed his writings at the age of 16.

Shankaracharya had an untiring zeal for travel and a passion for debating with scholars. He toured all over India, from Kashmir to Cape Comorin and from Gujarat to Assam. As a result of the incessant and extensive tour that he undertook, he came to have a large number of followers. Shri Padmapad was his chief disciple. Among those he met were Kumariabhatt, another contemporary scholar, his learned disciple Mandan Misra and the latter's wife Bharati. In the debate, he defeated the couple and converted them to his views. He renamed Mandan Misra as Sureshwaracharya, who was later to become first 'Sanyasi' after Shankaracharya, the 'Snyasi' in charge of the Sringeri Math in the South (Mysore State), the first one founded by the Great Master. The other three monasteries set up by him are at Dwarka in the West, Puri in the east and Badrinath in the north. The purpose of establishing these monasteries in the four corners of the country was to propagate the 'advaita' philosophy, make the people tour the whole country on pilgrimage and know the people of various parts of the country with all their variety of language, customs and manners. He created a cultural consciousness among the people and strengthened it. He was not merely a theoretician but a very practical philosopher and an excellent organiser.

The cardinal principle of his teaching is that liberation consists in the removal of 'avidya' (ignorance) and the realisation of the identity of the 'jeeva' or the individual-self and Brahma or the Supreme Being.

Shankaracharya was an intellectual of the first order, with tremendous moral and spiritual strength. He was a great 'warrior', but not in the ordinary sense of the term. The intellect was his weapon ; the assembly of scholars was the arena of his battles ; and ignorance, hypocrisy and superstitions were the enemies that he vanquished.

In classical times, Kashmir was the meeting place of different religions and systems of philosophy. It was also a great seat of learning and of Sanskrit scholarship. The name of Shankaracharya is of particular significance for the people of Kashmir because it was here that he was crowned with glory after having defeated scholars from all parts of the country, ascended the 'Sarvajna Peetham'—the throne of omniscience.

During his visit to Srinagar, he gave discourses on the *advaita* philosophy in the Shiva temple situated on the top of the 305 metre high hill overlooking the Dal Lake. This hill is the most distinguishing landmark of the area and commands a panoramic view of the charming city. It was previously known as Gopadri or Gopa hill, named after King Gopaditya who built the temple in the 4th century B. C. Both the hill and the temple have since been named after Shankaracharya. This fact speaks volumes for the influence wielded by him on the cultural life of the people. He also visited the holy cave temple of Amarnath situated at a height of 3880 metres in the Himalayas. His end came at the age of 32 when, according to legend, he went into Samadhi in a cave at Kedarnath and did not appear thereafter.

This great son of India did the work of many lives in a short span of 32 years. His was a very purposeful life. Several miracles connected with his life are given in '*Shankar Vijaya*'—a chronicle of his victories. The greatest miracle, however, was his own life. There is a saying in Sanskrit *Muhoortam jwalitam Sreyo na cha dhoomayitam Chiram*—which means "it is better to live and shine for a moment (like lightning) rather than live a long but purposeless life and end in smoke." Shankaracharya's life bears true testimony to this.

KALHANA

KALHANA, the great historian of Kashmir, has been the biggest source of information about the various rulers of the Valley and their times, but has left us precious little about himself. Though born of parents who wielded wealth and power, he was a truly humble person and did not like to speak or write about himself. All we learn about him from his own works, comprising eight thousand verses, is his name and that he was the son of "the illustrious Minister of Kashmir, Lord Champaka."

In his writings, however, he has left very detailed information about the period in which he lived, i.e, the 12th century A.D. He began his famous chronicle of Kashmir, *Rajatarangini*, towards the close of the Saka year 1070, corresponding to 1148-49 A.D. and completed it in the following year.

Kalhana's father, Champaka, was one of the most trusted Ministers of King Harsha who reigned over Kashmir from 1089 to 1101 A.D. He held important offices, including the office of *Dwarapati* or the Commandant of Frontier Defences. A Brahmin by birth, Champaka proved his prowess as a brave soldier. He distinguished himself in an expedition on behalf of his king against the castle of Dugdaghata (*Dodakhot*) situated on Kashmir's northern frontier with the Dard country. Champaka was very loyal and devoted to his master.

Kalhana belonged to a talented family which came originally from Parihasapora, the picturesque new capital built by Lalitaditya four centuries earlier. His uncle, Kanaka, was a good singer and lived here. In all probability our great poet-historian Kalhana was also born here.

Kalhana enjoyed all the advantages of high birth. He was well looked after and was brought up with care. His education was the very best available in those times. He studied literature, religion, politics, astrology and *ayurveda*. He acquired a thorough knowledge of the great Sanskrit classics, *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. He was also well acquainted with the works of Kalidasa and other Indian poets, including the native Kashmiri poets like Bilhana and Kshemendra.

Kalhana made the best use of his position and means to travel extensively all over the valley and meet all kinds of people. His intimate knowledge of the topography of his native Kashmir is amply proved by references in his works.

His scholarship and learning coupled with his other qualities of head and heart, won for Kalhana the esteem and respect of his countrymen in his day. A contemporary poet, Mankhya, describes him as holding a distinguished position among the expert masters of *Kavya* (poetry). He, as also the other contemporary scholars and writers, considered him fully capable of accomplishing his chosen task of compiling a history of Kashmir from the earliest times to his own day. Mankhya pays a high tribute to his poetic skill and notes his 'enthusiastic devotion to the study of stories and legends of many kinds'.

Kalhana was a man of catholic outlook and wide sympathies. Though a Shaiva by birth, he had equal veneration for the other Hindu gods. His regard for the Buddha and the tenets and practices of Buddhism was remarkable. At one place, he refers to the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas as 'comforters of all beings' and as 'embodiments of perfect charity and nobility of feeling.'

During Kalhana's lifetime, dramatic changes took place in Kashmir. King Harsha ascended the throne in 1089 A.D, at the end of the twenty-six years of rule of his father, Kalasa, a

highly accomplished prince. Harsha began well and it appeared certain that Kashmir would enjoy a period of peace and consolidation. Unfortunately, however, destiny willed otherwise. A luxurious court and extravagant military expenditure led him into financial difficulties. To overcome these, he took recourse to the imposition of heavy imposts and oppressive fiscal exactions. This made matters worse and the 'Damaras' or landed aristocracy rose in revolt under the leadership of Uchchhala and Sussala, two brothers who were related to Harsha. The harsh measures of administration had alienated the people and the nobles from the King. As a result, Harsha lost in this struggle and had a tragic end by murder. His successors Uchchhala (1101—1111 A.D.) and Sussala (1111—1128 A.D.) met a similar end. It was only after a decade or so of Jayasimha's reign (1128—1154 A.D.) that Kashmir once again enjoyed a period of peace and prosperity. It was at this time that Kalhana embarked upon his stupendous task.

The fate of Kalhana's family was indissolubly linked with that of Harsha. His father, Champaka, was greatly devoted to the king who patronized his younger brother, Kanaka too. During the king's last desperate but fruitless struggle for his crown and life, when all his other Ministers had deserted him, Champaka stood by him loyally. Naturally, this brought him into disfavour with the king's opponents. Although he survived Harsha by a few years, he was stripped of all positions of power in the affairs of the royal court.

Kalhana too never held office under any of the rulers of the new dynasty, nor did he enjoy any special favour from them. This was all for the best since it enabled our author to discuss contemporary events and men including the ruling monarch, Jayasimha, with complete freedom and impartiality. It also explains the welcome absence in the *Rajatarangini* of the redundant praise and naive flattery of patrons which mars many an ancient

work. His criticism of some of Jayasimha's actions makes it abundantly clear that the *Rajatarangini* was not written at the behest of the ruler nor was the author bothered about the reaction it would evoke in the king's mind. He wrote his great work out of an inner compulsion to give his people a correct and unbiased account of their history and especially of the events of his own time in which, to quote his own words. "Fate let some fall as they rose, and threw up others while they fell and thus seemed to play with men as if they were mere balls." He wanted to impress upon his readers and, through them, on his countrymen that all worldly, glory, power and pomp are but transient and temporary and the offences against moral laws inevitably bring their own retribution.

Kalhana was not the first to attempt a history of his native region. The historical tradition in Kashmir goes back many centuries prior to him. His illustrious predecessors in this field included Helaraja, Padmamihira and Chavillakara. He himself mentions two others—Shuvrata and Kshemendra—who also compiled historical compendiums based on earlier chronicles, but does not rate them high. Kalhana distinctly mentions that he had consulted eleven works of former writers containing the accounts of kings, besides *Nilamatapurana* which is still extant.

Kalhana openly acknowledged his debt to them. He clearly stated what he took from the *Nilamatapurana* and from Helaraja, Padmamihira and Chavillakara. Kalhana tells us that his purpose was to give a connected account of his country's history because the narrative of past events had become fragmentary in many respects. For this purpose, he used, besides the old chronicles, the inscriptions recording the consecration of temples and grants by the former rulers. The detailed account which Kalhana gives us of the history of Kashmir in his own

time, was based mainly on personal knowledge and on what he had learnt from contemporary witnesses.

Kalhana looked upon his work more as a *Kavya* (poetical work). For us, however, its main interest lies in the fact that it gives us an integrated historical account of the valley from the earliest times to the middle of the twelfth century A. D. Though designated *Rajatarangini*, literally 'River of Kings', it does not confine itself to an account of the kings and queens alone. It brings before us, in life-like portraits, hundreds of other actors—high and low—who have played a role in Kashmir's history. Among the best appraisals of *Rajatarangini* has been the one by Jawaharlal Nehru in which he said :

"Kalhana's book is something far more than a record of kings' doings. It is a rich store-house of information, political, social and to some extent economic. We see the panoply of the middle ages, the feudal knights in glittering armour, quixotic chivalry and disgusting cruelty, loyalty unto death and senseless treachery; we read of royal amours and intrigues of fighting and militant and adulterous queens. Women seem to play quite an important part, not only behind the scenes but in the councils and the field as leaders and soldiers. Sometimes we get intimate glimpses of human relations and human feelings of love and hatred, of faith and passion. We read of Suyya's great engineering feats and irrigation works; of Lalitaditya's distant wars of conquest in far countries; of the building of temples and monasteries and their destruction by unbelievers and iconoclasts who confiscated the temple treasures. And then there were famines and floods and great fires which decimated the population and reduced the survivors to misery."

HAZRAT MOIN-UD-DIN CHISHTI

KHWAJA MOIN-UD-DIN CHISHTI was born in the town of Sanjar in Iran on April, 18, 1139 (according to some 1136). His parents were direct descendants of the Holy Prophet of Islam. His father, Syed Ghayas-un-din Hasan, was a very pious man. His mother, Syeda Bibi Ummutwara alias Mah-e-Noor, was also a very religious person.

It is said that even during his childhood, he displayed rare piety and a spirit of self-sacrifice. He always shared his food with his playmates. Once he was going to Idgah for the Id prayers, dressed in rich clothes, when he met a boy in rags. Without any hesitation, he gave the poor boy some of his clothes and took him to Idgah with him as if he were a dear friend.

According to the author of *Siyar-ul-Arafin*, Khwaja Moin-ud-din renounced the world after coming into contact with a dervish, Ibrahim Qandozi. He was hardly fifteen at that time. Selling all his worldly belongings, he distributed the sale proceeds to the poor. He bade farewell to all his near and dear ones and left his town of Neshapur for Bokhara which was a famous seat of learning in those days. Walking all alone from Neshapur to Bokhara through jungles infested with wild beasts and without any money, he determined to seek the Truth.

While in Bokhara, Khwaja Moin-ud-din received his education under many learned Ulemas. The most prominent of them was Maulana Hissam-ud-din Bokhari from whom he

received, as the mark of his graduation, the *Jubba* (cloak) and *Dastar-e-Fazilat* (turban of learning)—the two highest attainments of that time.

After completing his education at Bokhara, Khawaja, Moin-ud-din went to Samarkand, another great seat of learning. There he perfected his knowledge of Theology, Philosophy and Grammar.

Khwaja Sahib now turned his attention to the spiritual side of life. For this, he needed a *murshid* (spiritual preceptor) and left Samarkand in search of one. He went to Harwan or Haroon in the vicinity of Baghdad where one of the greatest Sufi dervishes of the time, Khwaja Usman Harooni lived. That great saint accepted Khwaja Moin-ud-din as his *mureed* (disciple).

After completing his education at Bokhara, Khwaja Moin-ud-din associated with his preceptor and spent all his time attending on him. While on journeys, he personally carried his master's bedding, drinking water and food. He remained in his company for twenty years. After that, he was awarded the *Khirqe-e-Khilafat* (robes conferring spiritual succession upon a disciple) at Baghdad in 1186 A.D. He left Baghdad on a tour on his own and travelled widely in Hejaz, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan.

In the year 1191, he entered India and proceeded to Delhi *via* Multan, Lahore and Samana (a town in the erstwhile Patiala State). His entry into India coincided with the first battle of Tarain in which Shahab-ud-din Ghauri was defeated by Prithvi Raj Chauhan. Khwaja Sahib was advised not to proceed towards Delhi in such a disturbed political condition. He said that, as a dervish he had nothing to fear and entered Delhi with a small band of his followers.

With the news of his arrival in Delhi, people flocked to see him and the Khwaja was given full freedom to preach his

religion. A large number of local inhabitants embraced Islam. He then deputed his disciple, Khwaja Qutub-ud-din Bakhtiar Kaki (whose tomb is at Mehrauli, near the Qutab Minar), to remain in Delhi and to continue the work which he had initiated. He himself proceeded towards Ajmer.

According to a reliable source, Hazrat Khwaja Moin-ud-din Chisthi arrived in Ajmer at the age of 52 in 1191 A.D. Though he had entered a completely alien land, he had nothing to fear as he was armed with tolerance, love and affection, and forbearance and forgiveness for all. After settling in Ajmer, Khwaja Sahib married Bibi Asmat, daughter of Syed Wajih-ud-din Mashhadi. His second wife's name was Bibi Ummatulla. He had three sons, Khwaja Fakhr-ud-din, Khwaja Hussam-ud-din and Khwaja Zia-ud-din Sayeed and one daughter, Bibi Hafiza Jamal, from his two wives.

The exact dates of Khwaja Sahib's birth and death are not available. There is much difference of opinion about these dates among historians. According to some, he passed away on the 6th of Rajab, 633 A.H. (1237 A.D.) at the ripe old age of 97. Some say that the date of his death was the 6th of Rajab 627 A.H. (1229 A.D.). It is believed that, on the night of the 5th of Rajab, the great saint retired to his room after the night prayers. He closed the door of his room and instructed his devotees not to disturb him in the night. When the door remained closed at the time of the morning prayers, it was forced open and the great dervish was found to have expired.

By his life-long devotion to humanity and his simplicity, tolerance and affection for all, Khwaja Sahib earned the popular title of Gharib-Nawaz (helper of the poor and the needy). For the last 750 years, his annual Urs (death anniversary) is celebrated on the first six days of Rajab, in which thousands of men and women belonging to all reli-

gions participate. A large number of his devotees come from foreign countries also. The Dargah Sharif of Hazrat Khwaja Moin-ud-din Chishti is to this day a centre of pilgrimage for Hindus and Muslims alike. His piety and love for God as also his broad humanitarianism were remarkable. To him, all men and women were equal and he accepted them as brothers and sisters without regard to creed or religion.

The Dargah at Ajmer is at the foot of the Taragarh hill on the northern end. It has two mighty gateways (*Buland Darwaza*), each about 22 metres (75 ft.) high. These were built by Sultan Ghayas-ud-din Khilji of Mandu who ruled over Malwa from 1469 to 1500 A.D. The second *Buland Darwaza*, on the north, is now the main entrance to the Dargah. It was built by Usman Ali Khan, the Nizam of Hyderabad in 1912. Akbar was the first Mughal king to visit the Dargah on foot. He went there after Ajmer came into his possession. He built the Akbari Masjid in the Dargah in 1571.

The unique feature of the Urs celebration, besides the *Fatiha*, is the looting of food cooked in two enormous *degs* (cauldrons). The larger cauldron presented to the Dargah by Akbar can hold about 70 maunds (about 2,500 kg.) of cooked rice. The second one was presented by Emperor Jahangir and holds 28 maunds (about 1,000 kg.) of rice. When the food is cooked after the *Fatiha*, it is looted under the traditional custom by the inhabitants of the Anderkot.

The main tomb is of white marble inlaid with precious stones. It has a silver canopy over it and is enclosed by silver railing. The ceiling of the dome has a costly velvet covering which was originally presented by Maharaja Gaekwad of Baroda. Hundreds of kilograms of fresh flowers, especially jasmine and rose, are offered at the tomb daily by the visiting pilgrims and devotees.

Khwaja Sahib founded the Chishtia order of Sufism in

India. Its spiritual mission is to shatter the walls which stand between man and man for diverse reasons, and to knit them in a common bond of love, regardless of religious affiliation. The Chishtias believe and preach that God is love and that the entire creation constitutes a single family of God. .

In one of his letters to his disciples, Khwaja Sahib wrote :
“Give up avarice. He who gives it up attains his object.”

In another letter he said : “If God has given you eyes, you will see that all paths lead to Him.”

HAZRAT NIZAM-UD-DIN AULIA

HAZRAT NIZAM-UD-DIN AULIA was a direct descendant of the Holy Prophet. His ancestors migrated from Bokhara to India and ultimately settled at Budaun (U.P.). He was born at Budaun in the month of Safar, 636 A.H. (1238 A.D.).

When he was only five years old, his father, Hazrat Syed Ahmed, passed away. His mother, Bibi Syeda Zuleikha, took keen interest in the education and upbringing of her young son. He received his elementary education at Budaun and was later sent to Delhi for higher education. Here, he attained proficiency in the various branches of learning under the famous scholars of the day, Maulana Shams-ud-din and Maulana Kamal-ud-din. Khwaja Nizam-ud-din pursued his studies diligently and soon earned distinction in the literary circle of Delhi.

In his childhood, he had heard about Hazrat Baba Farid Ganj Shakar of Ajodhan (Pak Patan) and was attracted towards him. At Delhi, he was staying near the house of Sheikh Najib-ud-din, brother of Hazrat Baba Farid. Khwaja Nizam-ud-din became a frequent visitor to Sheikh Najib's house and developed close friendship with him.

Khwaja Nizam-ud-din's admiration for Sheikh Farid increased to such an extent that he set out for Ajodhan, where Sheikh Farid was living, without making any provision for the journey. He met the great Sheikh in 655 A.H. (1257 A.D.). The Sheikh divined in him a true successor not only to him, but to all the great Chishti saints of the past.

Accordingly, the Sheikh welcomed him warmly and accepted him as his disciple.

The first precepts that Sheikh Farid taught his young disciple were that one should try to win over one's enemy and should never fail to fulfil all one's obligations.

Khwaja Nizam-ud-din visited Ajodhan thrice during the lifetime of the great Sheikh. On Ramzan 13th, 664 A.H. (1265 A.D.), Sheikh Farid granted his *Khilafatnama* to Khwaja Nizam-ud-din Aulia *i.e.* named him as his successor. Henceforth, the Khwaja devoted his whole life to the propagation of the Chishti principles. He was proficient in *Hadith* (Tradition), *Tafsir* (commentary on the Holy Quran) and mystic literature.

Barani's account of the Khwaja's popularity and influence deserves to be quoted. He writes :

"Khwaja Nizam-ud-din had opened wide his doors and admitted all sorts of people—nobles and plebians, rich and poor, learned and illiterates, free men and slaves. People refrained from many improper things, because they considered themselves disciples of the Khwaja. The general public showed an inclination to religion and prayer. There was no quarter of the city in which a gathering of the pious was not held every month."

Sheikh Farid had prophesied, "Nizam-ud-din, you will be a tree under whose soothing shadow people will rest." Khwaja Nizam-ud-din proved himself true to the expectations of his master.

At Delhi, Khwaja Sahib had selected Ghayaspur, a secluded place, about 10 kilometres (6 miles) from the old city, as his abode to pray and meditate in peace. This place is now known as Nizam-ud-din and lies almost in the heart of the great metropolis.

His name and fame had reached far away places and people in large numbers flocked to him for guidance, solace and help. The King of Delhi, Ala-ud-din Khilji tried to meet him many times, but Khwaja Sahib always avoided him, though many of the King's courtiers were among his disciples and admirers. Soon, his *Khanqah* became a great centre of learning. The presents in cash and kind which he got were passed on to meet the expenses of the *Langar* (free kitchen) which he maintained. He had given strict orders that whatever was received during a single day must be spent by the same evening. It is recorded by historians that thousands of poor and needy persons were fed and helped daily by the *Langar*. But the Khwaja himself fasted most of the days, and, in the evening, *he ate only half of a bread with some boiled vegetable.*

The famous poet and musician, Amir Khusro, was one of the ardent devotees of the Khwaja and has composed many poems in his master's praise.

Truthful, honest, sincere, affectionate and considerate, the Khwaja was a living embodiment of all the moral virtues which he preached to his disciples and visitors. His warm and loving nature responded to the slightest sign of human suffering. He had the loftiness of spirit which grows out of a selfless nature and elicits spontaneous devotion. People who visited him were captivated by his charm and his very look inspired faith and confidence.

Khwaja Nizam-ud-din remained a bachelor throughout his life. He died in 725 A.H. (1325 A.D.) and was buried in his *Hujra*, the room in which he used to meditate. He is regarded as one of the most celebrated saints of India and is popularly known as 'Sultan-ul-Aulia' (king of saints) and 'Mehboob-e-Elahi' (beloved of God).

Being a dervish of the Chishti Sufi order, he taught tolera--

tion, compassion and respect for other faiths. One of the favourite sayings of the Khwaja was : "Nothing will bring greater reward on the day of judgment than bringing happiness to the hearts of men."

SANT KABIR

OUR country has produced many great saints and religious teachers. Few of these, however, have expressed their deeper thoughts in such simple words and images as Kabir has done. In numerous hymns and verses, Kabir sang about the sorrows of attachment to worldly possessions and about the joys of having a pure heart filled with the love of God. Kabir's verses have become a part of our folklore and their simple message continues to move and influence us.

Kabir lived in the 15th century, a little more than 500 years ago. This was the period in which many mystics and saints were born in India. There were Muslim saints as well as Hindu saints, but they all put the love of God above the doctrines of this religion or that. However, nowhere else are Hinduism and Islam so beautifully and harmoniously blended as in the life and teachings of Kabir.

During his lifetime, and even to this day Kabir was claimed as their own by the followers of more than one religion. Muslims regarded him as a *Sufi*. Hindus worshipped him as a *Bhakt* or devotee, no different from Tulsidas or Chaitanya. The *Adi Granth*, the sacred book of the Sikhs, quotes verses of Kabir in support of the doctrines preached by Guru Nanak. Many Christians have seen a close parallel between the legendary life of Kabir and incidents in the life of Christ.

There is great dearth of material of historical value for an authentic story of Kabir's life. Even the date of his birth is subject to uncertainty, the most probable one being 1440 A.D. There are varying legends about his parentage and upbringing. According to one of these, the infant Kabir was

found lying on a big waterlily blossom in a tank called Lahar Tara near Varanasi. Tradition has it that he was the abandoned child of a Brahmin widow, and was picked up by a childless couple named Niru and Nima, who were Muslim weavers by caste. Adopted by them as their fosterchild, he was given the name of Kabir which means 'great' in the Arabic language.

There is an interesting legend about the manner in which Kabir came to acquire this name. It is believed that soon after Niru and Nima found the child, they called home a *kazi* (Muslim priest) and requested him to open the *Koran* to find a name for the child. He found the name 'Kabir', derived from the same root 'Akbar' and 'Kibriya'. On finding these names the *kazi* was much perplexed. Other *kazis* were called. All opened the *Koran*, but the result was the same. They closed the book in silent astonishment. It was impossible, they all agreed, that a title of such dignity should be given as a name to a weaver's child.

But, the weavers's child was no ordinary person. From early childhood, Kabir gave signs of a mystic nature. The most interesting sign was his refusal, very early in life, to accept the normal distinctions imposed by religion and caste. As a boy, Kabir used to annoy both his Hindu and Muslim playmates by crying out: "Ram, Ram" and "Hari Hari". While the former resented the chanting of those sacred names by an 'infidel', the latter called him a *Kafir*. He however, ridiculed both for their narrow-mindedness. From his early days, Kabir was given to periods of silence broken by extraordinary actions and utterances. Some of his acts of love and charity and some of the things that he said as a child often used to surprise his parents and neighbours.

Being the child of a poor weaver, Kabir did not receive any formal education. But his restless mind made him seek the

company of wise and holy men. He used to disappear quietly from his father's house, where he helped in his family craft, and spent days wandering around in deep thought or engaged in conversation with religious men.

He came especially close to two holy men. One was Ramanand, a Hindu, and the other was Sheikh Taqi, a Muslim. Both were famous for their piety and learning and had large followings throughout the country.

In the *Dabistan*, a Persian history said to have been written by Mohsin Fani of Kashmir during the reign of Akbar, it is stated that Kabir was a weaver and a believer in one God. It is further stated that, in his desire to find spiritual guidance, he visited Muslim as well as Hindu sages. Finally, he became a disciple of Ramanand and thereby hangs an interesting tale. Having learnt that Ramanand regularly visited a particular place on the bank of the Ganga before dawn, he lay down upon the steps in the hope of attracting Ramanand's attention. His hope was realised when, in the darkness of night, the holy man stumbled over the body of Kabir and immediately jumped aside exclaiming "Ram, Ram". Kabir knew that no words could have come to his lips so rapidly as the *mantra* of his order. He claimed that as he was already in possession of this *mantra*, he considered himself initiated into the order of his *guru*. Coming to know of the devotion of Kabir, Ramanand was only too pleased to accept him as his disciple.

Kabir was a young man of 30 when he first made the acquaintance with Sheikh Taqi. The Sheikh introduced him to the charms of mysticism. In one of his verses, Kabir refers to Sheikh Taqi in these words: "My *Haj* is on the bank of the Gomati, where dwells my *Pir* wearing a yellow robe."

According to a legend, Kabir requested the Sheikh to bestow upon him a blessing which might enable him to remove

those differences which separated Hindus from Muslims. Thereupon, the Sheikh told Kabir that a time will come when both Hindus and Muslims would regard him (Kabir) with equal reverence.

This came true, but not before Kabir had encountered the opposition of the orthodox sections among both Hindus and Muslims. Kabir was not a scholar and had no experience of book-learning. He was a seer and a preacher of love. He had no respect for the rituals practised by the orthodox Hindus and Muslims. He openly denounced these rituals and pactices. There are many stories of his open conflict with orthodox preachers. According to one of the stories, a group of Brahmins were talking about the purifying quality of the water of the Ganga. Kabir filled a wooden cup with water from the river and offered it to them to drink. They were horrified by thought of drinking out of the cup belonging to a low-caste man. Upon this, Kabir remarked, "If the Ganga water cannot purify my cup, how can I beleive that it can wash away my sins."

Because of his being denounced both by Hindus and Muslims as a troublesome person, Kabir seems to have been perscuted by Emperor Sikandar Lodi. It is said that when Kabir went and stood before the Emperor, the men of the court asked him to bow before the monarch. Kabir refused to do so. He said that the only monarch he knew was God. At first the Emperor seems to have been provoked to anger, but later he allowed Kabir to go in peace. Though his life was spared, he was banished from the city of Varanasi. Thereafter he appears to have moved about and visited places all over North India. He died at Maghar near Gorakhpur in 1518.

By the time of his death, Kabir's fame had spread far and wide and he had attracted a large following both among the Hindus and the Muslims. On his death, there arose a bitter

dispute between the Hindus and the Muslims about the disposal of his dead body. Seeing no end to the quarrel, Kabir's form is said to have appeared before them and asked them to lift the shroud and look beneath. In the place of the corpse, to their great astonishment, they found a heap of flowers. These were equally divided by the Muslims and the Hindus. One half was buried by the Muslims at Maghar and the other half taken by the Hindus to Varanasi and cremated. There could hardly have been a more fitting conclusion to a life which had demonstrated the absurdity of all divisions created by religion.

In the religious history of India, Kabir occupies a place of great importance. He believed in the unity of all religions. For him, the true teaching of all religions was love. Love brought people together, while religion as practised by ignorant and fanatical people created conflict and division. He condemned idolatry and most of the Hindu ceremonies and rites. He took the Muslims also to task for their intolerance of other faiths.

There are numerous poems composed by Kabir. It is probable that he himself did not commit them to writing, but that they were remembered and treasured by his disciples. Most of his teachings were oral and were reduced to writing at a later stage. The earliest writings in which his teachings were recorded are the *Bijak* and the *Adi Granth*. A great deal of his teachings has come down to this day through the word of mouth in the form of folk-songs. Most of these songs are in simple Hindi as it was spoken by the common people of those days. Although the poetry of Kabir is not polished and his language full of similes drawn from the everyday life of farmers and artisans, his high place in Hindi literature is unquestionable.

Here are some of his more famous sayings freely translated into English :

"We are idols of clay, to which the name of man has been given; We are guests of four days in a boarding house."

"Adding *Kauri* to *kauri*, he brings together lakhs and crores. At the time of departure, he gets nothing at all, even his *langoti* is plucked away from him."

"What you will do tomorrow, do today. What you will do today, do at once. In a moment, death may come, when would you do it then."

"A good man does not give up his goodness, though he comes up against crores of bad persons : even as the sandal tree is not deprived of its healing properties though poisonous snakes twine round it."

"I and you are of one blood, and one life animates us all. From one mother the world is born. What knowledge is this which keeps us apart."

These are pearls of wisdom. But nowhere is the entire message of Kabir more beautifully summed up as in the following song :

"O servant, where does thou seek Me ?

Lol I am beside Thee,

I am neither in the temple nor in the mosque;

I am neither in Kaaba nor in Kailash;

Neither am I in rites and ceremonies,

Nor in Yoga and renunciation.

If thou art a true seeker, though shalt at once see Me :
Thou shalt meet me in a moment of time.

Says Kabir, Listen O Sadhul God is the breath of
all breath. There is nothing but water at the holy

bathing places; and I know that they are useless, for I have bathed in them.

The images are all lifeless, they cannot speak; I know, for I have cried aloud to them.

The *Purana* and *Koran* are mere words, lifting up the curtain, I have seen.

Kabir gives utterance to the words of experience and he knows very well that all other things are false."

AMIR KHUSRO

PLACES of historical interest abound in Delhi, the capital city of our country. Most of these places remind us of kings and conquerors, but there are many which are associated with the names of great saints, artists and poets. Prominent among the latter is the mausoleum of Hazrat Nizam-ud-din Aulia, a Muslim mystic and saint who lived in the 13th century. Inside it, close to the grave of Hazrat Nizam-ud-din himself, is the grave of his dearest disciple, known to the world of Persian and Hindi literature as Amir Khusro.

Amir Khusro is regarded as the foremost Indian poet of the Persian language. His name is mentioned along with the greatest names in Persian poetry, such as Firdausi and Nizami. In the best tradition of Persian poetry, Khusro's poetry is primarily of a mystic character. It sings the praises of God, marvels at the beauty of nature and extols the virtue of love.

Amir Khusro was not only a great poet, but was also a prolific one. He is credited with having written nearly half a million verses. Quite a large number of these verses is in Hindi, or language which was in its formative stage in those days. Amir Khusro was among the great literary figures who gave the growth of Hindi both impetus and direction. His greatest contribution lay in the fact that he was the first to use a simple and popular form of Hindi, which is known as *Khariboli*. While his Persian poetry showed the influence of classical scholarship, Amir Khusro's Hindi poetry was of a popular character. It reveals how close Amir Khusro was to the masses. This was in spite of the fact that he was born in

a noble family of Turkish origin and had to spend most of his life in the courts of kings and in the company of saints.

Amir Khusro was given the name of Abul Hasan at the time of his birth. He was born in 1253 A. D. at Patiali in the Etah district of Uttar Pradesh. His father, Amir Saifuddin Mahmud, had come from the Balakh region of Turkey to make his home in India. At the age of four, Amir Khusro went to Delhi with his father who had joined the court of Sultan Iltumish. During the seventyone years of his life, Khusro was to live mainly in Delhi where he witnessed the rise and fall of three ruling dynasties—Slave, Khilji and Tughlak. He personally enjoyed the patronage of several successive rulers of Delhi.

Khusro first entered royal service as the tutor to King Balban's son, Mohammad, who was very fond of the company of the learned. His wit and wisdom won him influential friends. Amir Khusro lived and conducted himself like a man of the world, but at heart he remained a poet and something of a seer. While still a boy, he had become a disciple of the great saint and mystic, Hazrat Nizam-ud-din Aulia. This was a life-long association which had a far reaching influence on Khusro's mind and his work. Khusro was deeply attached to his master and the saint was equally fond of his talented disciple.

Khusro's talents did not lie in any one direction alone. His was a many-sided genius. He was equally at home in the company of saints and kings. He was a master of many languages besides Persian in which he wrote both poetry and prose profusely. He could express himself fluently in Arabic and Sanskrit. Steeped in the lore of Islam, he was a keen student of Hindu scriptures. His knowledge of the beliefs and myths of the Hindus was almost as great as his understanding of his forefathers' religion, Islam.

In many places, Amir Khusro has spoken of the richness and beauty of the Hindi language. He can certainly be

counted among those who strongly influenced the growth of Hindi.

Amir Khusro was also a lover of music. He possessed a beautiful voice and could sing with great charm. He composed many songs and sonnets. His creative genius expressed itself in the field of music also. He is credited with having introduced the *khayal* into Indian music and invented the now well-known instrument called *sitar*.

Besides being a poet and a musician, Amir Khusro was also a statesman and soldier. He is reported to have taken part in many military campaigns. Of some of these campaigns, he has given an account in his autobiographical works.

Amir Khusro was away in Bengal on the last of these expeditions when he learnt of the serious illness of Hazrat Nizam-ud-din. He rushed to Delhi, but the saint had died before he could reach him. The death of his *Pir* gave Amir Khusro a deep personal shock from which he could not recover. He gave up all worldly possessions and became a hermit. Within five months of his master's demise, Khusro himself died and was buried near Nizam-ud-din Aulia's grave situated in present-day New Delhi.

LAL DED

FROM very early times, women have played a notable part in the social, cultural and political life of India, particularly in Kashmir. There are few walks of life in which they have not achieved prominence. They have distinguished themselves as rulers and counsellors, as leaders and reformers, as singers and dancers and also as poets and philosophers. Lal Ded belongs to the last category.

Lal is believed to have been born about the middle of the fourteenth century A. D. in a Kashmiri Pandit family at Sempor, a village about 10 kilometres (six miles) south-east of Srinagar. As was the custom in those days, she was married at a very young age. Her husband belonged to a well-to-do family at Pampor, a village near Sempor. She received the name of Padmavati in her new home.

Lal's married life was far from happy. Among Kashmiri Pandits in those days, as indeed till recently, the daughter-in-law had little status in her husband's home. It was she who had to do most of the household work. She could share the company of her husband only in the darkness of the night when she was completely exhausted by the domestic chores. The mother-in-law ruled over the family.

Lal's mother-in-law was notoriously hard hearted. Many are the stories that are current even today about her harshness towards her young daughter-in-law. Unfortunately, her husband appears to have been indifferent to her and to the suffering that was the lot of his young wife in his home. But, in the highest tradition of Indian womanhood, Lal bore it all patiently.

Ill-treatment at home and frustration in love made Lal turn inwards. She sought refuge in the world of the spirit. Luckily, she had available to her the guidance of a great *sadhu* i.e. one who has achieved spiritual success. He was the family priest, Shri Kanth. Known also as Seda Bayu on account of his spiritual eminence, he led her into the mysteries of Kashmir's traditional Shaiva philosophy founded by his great ancestor Vasugupta in the ninth century A. D. Lal Ded herself says :—

The *Guru* gave me but one advice.

He asked me to turn inwards.

Henceforth, domestic troubles and worldly misfortunes meant little to Lal. She bore them all with calm resignation and without illwill towards anyone. Her exemplary behaviour at home won her the affectionate appellation of Lal Ded, i.e. the ideal daughter-in-law. Even today, young brides in Kashmir are exhorted to follow her example and bear all their hardships with the same fortitude.

Though she seldom spoke to any one about her difficulties and hardships, yet these could not remain hidden for long. One day, when she had gone to the river-side to fetch water, her friends among the women there asked her how she had enjoyed the feast on the previous night. Her cryptic reply was : "No matter whether they get a fat big sheep or a lean one killed, Lal will always have the lumpy blue stone as her share."

This remark was overheard by her father-in-law who, by chance, was passing that way. In the evening, he looked into the plate in which Lal was served her meal and, to his astonishment and chagrin, found a round stone underneath the thin covering of boiled rice. Obviously, the cruel mother-in-law did so to give the false impression that her daughter-in-law was served food generously.

Lal Ded's advancement on the path of spiritual realisation was rapid, and she could no longer be forced to remain confined within the four walls of a household. She had turned her back on the evanescent pleasures and pains of worldly existence. Buddha-like, she decided to go forth into the wide world as a wandering ascetic to preach the Truth which she had realized.

Though the ill-treatment which she received at the hands of her mother-in-law had won her the sympathy of all and sundry, her decision to take to the life of a wandering ascetic was not to the liking of many. They, therefore, thought her crazy at first. But, as time went on and people heard what she had to say, they realised the truth and wisdom of her sayings. Lal Ded began to be regarded as a great ascetic and philosopher. Respected by all, she was referred to as *Lallamaj* (Mother Lal) or *Laleswari* (Lal, the goddess).

The later half of the fourteenth century, when Lal Ded, lived, was a period of great stress and social change in Kashmir. Islam had made a peaceful advent into the valley some decades earlier and was beginning to make a forceful impact on the social and political life of the land. The new religion and its new set of social and cultural values posed a serious challenge to the traditional faith and culture. It was in fact a gigantic clash of ideas and ideals in which Kashmir's traditional faith in tolerance and religious freedom was at stake.

At this time of uncertainty, Lal Ded came as a saviour. She was, in fact, one of those noble figures who come into the world now and then to deliver the message of truth and love and exhort humanity to follow the higher ideals and shun the unreal frivolities of mortal existence.

Lal Ded was a confirmed monotheist ; she believed in the

one and only God. Her God was not the God of a section or of a few only. He was the God of all—of Hindus, Muslims and others alike. Lal Ded illustrated the fundamental unity of all by the analogy of ice, snow and water, which, though seemingly different, are yet the same in essence. Just as they become one when the sun shines upon them, so are all things seen to be one in the light of true knowledge.

All religions, she preached, were one in their essentials and that the differences of caste and creed and birth and position were only superficial. She urged people to live a good life, free from the evils of lust, greed and pride. She says in one of her Kashmiri verses :

Shiv Chhu thali thali rozan

Mo zan Heund ta Mussalman

Truk ai chhuk pan panun parzanav.

It means that Shiva permeates the whole universe; don't discriminate between Hindu and muslim; if thou art sharp enough, know thyself.

Like the Buddha, Lal Ded was opposed to blind dogma and barren ritual. She considered it unnecessary to go to forests and hermitages to seek Him. Renunciation or non-attachment was the keynote of Lal Ded's teaching. All labour is, according to her, prayer or worship provided it is undertaken from a sense of duty and in a spirit of dedication to Him.

Lal Ded's message was for one and all. She, therefore, preached it in the language of the masses and is, in fact, the first known poet who wrote in Kashmiri. She went about dancing in spiritual ecstasy pouring out her poetry. These gems of wisdom have been treasured by her adoring people in their memory from generation to generation. Lal Ded's sayings are known as *Lallavak* (from the Sanskrit word *vakya*)

and constitute nearly half of the numerous proverbs and wise sayings current in the Kashmiri language. There is not a Kashmiri, Hindu or Muslim, who has not some of them ready on the tip of his tongue. She is honoured by all today, as she was in her own day.

NUND RISHI

KASHMIR is among the most beautiful tracts of land on the face of the earth. People who visit it even once come to love it for ever afterwards. Its own people naturally love it much more. They love it not only for its abounding natural beauty, but also for the precious heritage of love and brotherhood bequeathed to them by the great and noble men and women produced by the enchanting vale of Kashmir.

One of the appellations by which the people of Kashmir designate their beautiful homeland is '*Rishiwor*' or '*Garden of Rishis*'. This is because the valley has given birth to so many saints and sages. The best known of them is Nund Rishi, also known as Sheikh Nur-ud-din.

This great sage was born at Kaimoh, a village about nine kilometres west of Khanabal on the national highway between Gazi Gund and Srinagar. His father Salar Sanz hailed from a noble family of Kishtwar (Jammu) that had migrated to the valley.

Salar Sanz was a God fearing person who took delight in the company of good and pious people. He was greatly attached to a Sufi saint, Yasman Rishi, at whose hands he is believed to have embraced Islam. Yasman arranged his marriage to a widow named Sudra who was descended from a Rajput tribe. The child of this happy union was Nund Rishi, born in 1376 A. D. By reason of giving birth to such a noble and distinguished son, the mother has come to be known as *Sudramoj* or 'mother Sudra' just as Lal Ded is known as "Lallamoj".

Nund Rishi was in fact a younger contemporary of Lal Ded. It is said that the new-born infant, Nund Rishi refused to feed

at its mother's breast. The fond parents approached Lal Ded for advice. She gently admonished the child in these words : "When you were not ashamed to come (into the world), why do you feel ashamed to take your mother's milk ?" There upon, the child merrily began to suck his sustenance from his mother's breast. The story is indicative of how, from the very beginning, he came to be associated with Kashmir's greatest woman-saint and philosopher.

Nund, as he was known in his early days, was married when he had barely entered his teens. He had children too, but from his very boyhood he had an aversion for worldly affairs. His parents tried to apprentice him to various trades, but he showed no interest in any one of them. His father's association with Yasman Rishi and other saintly persons had kindled his latent interest in matters of the spirit. Their life of self-denial and renunciation held a great fascination for him. Before he had got inextricably involved in family and worldly affairs, he decided to break away from all ties, including those of his family. Like the Buddha, he renounced the world and spent twelve years in a cave, meditating and practising severe penance. When he emerged from it, he was a mere skeleton. But, spiritually, he had advanced a great deal and was immediately acknowledged as a great saint. People of all creeds and from all walks of life flocked to him to pay their homage and seek his blessings. Henceforward, he reigned supreme in the hearts of Kashmiris.

Nund Rishi is regarded as the doyen of the 'Brotherhood of *Rishis*'. The *Rishis* are those people who have been known for their high spiritual attainments, simple living and self-abnegation. They lead a life of retirement and solitude and spend their time in pious deeds and meditation. Akbar's courtier, Abul Fazl, has described them as the "most respectable class" of people in Kashmir in his own day and as "true worshippers".

He wrote : "They do not loosen the tongue of calumny against those not of their faith, nor beg, nor importune. They employ themselves in planting fruit trees, and are generally a source of benefit to the people. They abstain from flesh-meat and do not marry."

The later part of the fourteenth century and the early fifteenth century was a period of great stress and change in Kashmir. Islam was spreading rapidly and many people embraced the new faith for its intrinsic merits. Many more, however, did so under pressure. The majority of the priests and proselytisers were from outside Kashmir. They were opposed to Nund Rishi. According to the *Rishinama* which contains an account of his life and teachings, they tried to trouble him in many ways. His hold on the people of Kashmir, however, increased from day to day, so much so that Mir Mohammad Hamadani, son and successor of the great Shah Hamadan (Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani), designated him as Nur-ud-din or 'light of the faith'.

Like Lal Ded, Sheikh Nur-ud-din has left us hundreds of wise sayings called *Shruks* (from the Sanskrit word *sloka*). He held Lal Ded in such great esteem that, in one of his verses, he says that she "gave out *amrit* in her outpourings." Like her, he was also opposed to the formalities of religion. He advises the people :

Do not go to *sheikh* and priest and *mullah*,
Do not shut thyself up in mosques or forests,
Enter thine own body with breath controlled in communion with God.

In another verse, he advises them to subdue the five senses to be able to attain heaven.

Sheikh Nur-ud-din disapproved of the priests who make use of religion as an instrument of personal gain and lay emphasis on its externals only. He says of them :

Thy rosary is like a snake ;
 Thou bendest it on seeing thy disciples;
 Thou hast eaten six platefuls, one like another;
 If thou art a priest, then who are robbers ?

In another verse he points out :

The priest have nice big turbans on their heads;
 They walk about daintily dressed,
 Dressed in priestly robes they indulge in mutton,
 They run away with cooking pots under their arms.

He believed in action, but the right one. He says :

The dog is barking in the compound,
 O Brothers, give ear and listen (to what it says)
 "As one sowed, so did he reap;
 Thou, Nunda, sow, sow, sow."

He firmly believed, "God is one, though his names are many." He did not discriminate between man and man on grounds of caste or creed. He preached that Hindus and Muslims are brethren descended from common ancestors and should, therefore, co-operate with one another. "God Himself would rejoice in their co-operation," he wrote. According to him, if we all co-operated to share one another's joys and sorrows, no one would ever come to grief.

Who will attain Heaven ? To this important question, he answers : One who shares his meal with another, who keeps fasts, is without fear and who gives up *Kama*, *Krodha*, *Lobha* and *Ahankara**. According to him, only such a one could be called a true Mussalman. In another verse, he described a true Mussalman as one who is an embodiment of humility, who eschews the company of the evil and pursues only the path of goodness and virtue and ferries across the ocean of existence both himself and others.

Sheikh Nur-ud-din's wise sayings are contained in two

* Sex, anger, greed and pride

volumes entitled *Rishinama* and *Nurnama* and, like the *Lallavaks*, constitute the precious heritage of the people of Kashmir, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Many of these, in simple homely Kashmiri, have become very common.

Sheikh Nur-ud-din passed away at the age of 63. His death was an occasion of national mourning and his body was given a State funeral. The ruling monarch, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, himself joined the funeral procession. His mortal remains lie buried at Tsrar, a village 25 kilometres to the south-west of Srinagar. His shrine, popularly known as Tsrar-i-Sharif, is a sacred place of pilgrimage for the people of Kashmir. Thousands of them flock to it every Thursday. In autumn, a big *mela* is held here in his honour and attracts lakhs of people from all over the valley.

ZAIN-UL ABIDIN

SEVEN centuries after Lalitaditya came another illustrious ruler of Kashmir who is remembered even today with respect and affection. He was Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin. In tolerance and patronage of faiths not his own, he rivalled Lalitaditya himself. Zain-ul-Abidin was a great builder who devoted himself untiringly to the task of enhancing the prosperity and glory of his land. During his reign, Kashmir witnessed a second Golden Age.

Zain-ul-Abidin ascended the throne in 1420 A. D. and ruled for half a century, till 1470 A. D. This was a time when tyranny and persecution by despotic rulers were the order of the day. This noble king stood in contrast to the general run of rulers at that time. The gentleness of his character, the catholicity of his outlook and the interest he took in redressing wrongs and healing the wounds that had been inflicted on his people, particularly the non-Muslims, during the time of his father and brother, set him apart as the brightest star in the firmament of India's long and chequered history.

Zain-ul-Abidin was an ideal ruler. Intensely devoted to his own religion, he held in great respect the religious sentiments of his people of other faiths. In an age when rulers and potentates maintained large harems, he was happy with only one wife. He abstained from the use of intoxicating liquors and did not take meat during the holy month of Ramzan. For his personal expenses, he used only the earnings of a private copper mine near Aishmuquam in Anantnag district. The royal treasury was for public use alone. He venerated saints and holy men, his special respect being reserved for Lal Ded and

Nund Rishi, whose teachings of love and brotherhood appealed deeply to him. His love for justice is well known. A contemporary historian, Jonaraja, writes, "Though the king was kind-hearted, yet for the sake of his people he would not forgive even his son or minister if he were guilty." He cites the case of one Mir Yahya who, in a state of drunkenness, had killed his wife. Although he was a great favourite of the king, he was found guilty and, therefore, executed.

Jonaraja narrates an interesting story of how the king dispensed justice with great wisdom. Once a Brahmin of Kamraz (the northern district around Lake Wular) complained to the king that his cow, lost four years ago, was with a person in Maraz (the southern district). The thief, when summoned, stoutly denied the charge of having stolen the animal which, he said, was with him since its birth. The astute king ordered some waternuts to be put before the cow and its calf. The cow ate them with relish while the calf, after a few sniffs, turned its head away. This clearly proved that the cow originally belonged to Kamraz where it was used to waternuts from the Wular, while its calf, born and brought up in Maraz, was unaccustomed to that kind of feed. The cow was, therefore, restored to the Brahmin and the thief suitably punished.

It was his intense love of justice and fairplay that made Zain-ul-Abidin seek so assiduously to rehabilitate the non-Muslims and to restore to them the right to pursue their own ancestral faith without any hindrance. He abolished all the discriminatory laws and practices of his predecessors and enacted laws to give them a just administration. All the measures of persecution introduced in his father's time were revoked. A welcome toleration of all faiths was proclaimed. The polltax on the Hindus was abolished and the killing of cows banned. The king forbade fishing and the killing of

birds in several spring held sacred by the Hindus. He himself abstained from meat on the Hindu holy festivals.

The ill-advised policy of persecution adopted by his predecessors had forced many Hindus to leave their native Kashmir. In the new atmosphere of tolerance and peace, brought about by the enlightened Sultan, most of them returned. Schools were opened for their children and free kitchens run for orphans and widows. Some of their temples which had been destroyed in the previous regime were rebuilt and permission was granted to build new ones. The king and his courtiers are known to have erected a number of temples and *mathas* or monasteries.

Zain-ul-Abidin had acquired a thorough knowledge of Sanskrit and spent part of the time he could spare from his royal duties in studying Sanskrit books, notably the *Yogavashishta*. For the benefit of those of his subjects who did not know Sanskrit, he got a number of Sanskrit works, including the *Rajatarangini* and the *Mahabharata* translated into Persian.

When Zain-ul-Abidin ascended the throne, there was great frustration among large sections of the people who had suffered during the previous regimes. Crime was common and corruption rife. According to Jonaraja, even the judges took bribes from both the plaintiffs and the defendants. Fraudulent transactions in property were usual. Due to the rampant persecution and insecurity in the previous regime, much of the land was left uncultivated by the farmers.

Zain-ul-Abidin took energetic measures to tone up the administration and improve the material prosperity of his kingdom. Crime and corruption were ruthlessly put down. All the criminals were apprehended and put behind the bars. To prevent fraudulent transactions in property, a strict system of registration of documents was instituted. Justice was dispensed quickly and without fear or favour. For the benefit of the

people, important laws and even prices and rates were engraved on copper plates and placed in halls of justice and markets.

To bring about an increase in food production, he reduced the state's share to one-fourth of the total produce in some areas and to one-seventh in others. A large number of irrigation canals were dug. Many of these exist of this day and have been repaired and renovated in recent years. The best known of these is the Shahkol at Bawan (Martand). Another is the Mar canal in Srinagar which takes the waters of the Dal Lake to the Anchar lake. Prior to this the Dal discharged its waters into the Vitasta (Jhelum) at the place where present-day Habba Ka Lal is situated.

As already stated, Zain-ul-Abidin was a great builder. He built a number of towns, villages and bridges. Zainakadal in Srinagar is known after him. So is the village Zainagir. His palace in Srinagar was twelve storeys high and contained numerous rooms, halls, verandahs and staircases. It was known as *Rajdan*. Another palace, built in Zainagir, was known as *Zainadab*. In all the new towns and villages he had rest houses built for his subjects. Gardens were also laid out for the people's recreation.

Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin encouraged the arts. In his Zeal for the introduction of new arts and crafts, he invited artisans and craftsmen from different places to settle in Kashmir. It is said that it was in his time that paper-making, papier-mache, cocoon rearing, stone-cutting and polishing were introduced into the valley.

The king was a great lover of music and other fine arts. In his reign, musicians from various places including Iran and Khorasan visited Kashmir. These, as also the local musicians, artists and actors, were handsomely rewarded.

Zain-ul-Abidin took keen interest in the intellectual growth and development of his people. He established a number of

schools and a college, known as Dar-ul-Uloom. The latter was placed under the charge of Maulana Kabir, a Kashmiri master of theology, who was persuaded to return to Kashmir from Herat. A large library was also established. According to Jonaraja, "the meritorious king built extensive lodging houses for students.....and helped the students by providing teachers, books, houses, food and money"

Zain-ul-Abidin's love of letters is well known. He wanted to revive Kashmir's ancient tradition as a great seat of learning. He set up a separate department for translations, where translations of Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit books was undertaken. Among the Sanskrit scholars who adorned his court, mention may be made of Jonaraja and Srivara who continued and brought down to their own times the narrative of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*. Bojhi Butt and Utta Soma translated several Sanskrit works into Persian. Utta Soma wrote an account of his patron's life entitled *Zainacharit*. Another native scholar, Bhattavatara, wrote *Zaina-Vilas*, dramatising an interesting episode in the King's eventful life. The Persian scholars at his court included Maulana Kabir, Mulla Hafiz Baghdadi, Mulli Jamal-ud-din, Qazi Mir Ali and Mullah Ahmad. The last-mentioned scholar completed the Persian translation of *Mahabharata* besides writing a historical account known as *Waqai-i-Kashmir*. The Sultan himself wrote two books in Persian. One of these was on the manufacture of fire-arms.

Not only in literature, but in other fields also, Zain-ul-Abidin patronized men of merit, irrespective of caste or creed. One of his Chief Ministers was a Buddhist named Tilakacharya. His other counsellors included Sribhat, who had cured the Sultan of a dangerous illness. Karpurabhat, a renowned physician, and Qazi Jamal-ud-din, the Chief Judge of the realm,

were among the others. Zain-ul-Abidin's enlightened policies made him a symbol of national unity and solidarity. Kashmiris, to this day, remember him as *Bud Shah* or "the great king."

GURU NANAK

OUR India is like a composite picture, blending in harmony many hues, and bearing the imprint of many great men, from the earliest saints down to Mahatma Gandhi. Each one of these wise men of extraordinary vision moulded the spirit of India and advanced the values that have been cherished through the ages and are even today held dear in this country.

One of these great seers was Nanak, founder of the Sikh faith, who aimed at integrating the minds of the people of this vast land and forging a bond of love and tolerance among the adherents of the two great religions then existing in India, namely, Hinduism and Islam. Both Hindus and Muslims claimed Nanak as their mentor. Indeed, it has been said of him :

*Baba Nanak Sah Fakir,
Hindu Ka Guru, Mussalman Ka Pir.*

He lived through an age marked by conflicts and upheavals but left the world a little better and more exalted, and a happier place for mankind to live in.

Nanak was born in 1469 at Talwandi, a small village now known as Nankana Sahib. This hallowed place is now in the Sheikhupura district of West Pakistan. His father, Mehta Kalu was the village *Patwari* or revenue accountant. Nanak was so named because he was born at the house of his mother's parents—*nanke* in Punjab. His sister Nanki was also born there and similarly named. Nanak felt disinterested in worldly affairs from his very childhood. Indeed, all his father's efforts to give him a formal education failed. He was fond of the company of *sadhus* and *darvishes* who used to roam about the

country. It was in this company that he mustered considerable knowledge of the Hindu and Muslim scriptures, beliefs and practices. He also developed mastery of the *Sadh-bhasa*, the language of the *sadhus*, then prevalent and also gained a pretty good knowledge of the Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic languages.

Frustrated at his failure in giving normal schooling to his child Kalu married him off at an early age, and a job was found for him as a storekeeper with a petty Nawab at Sultanpur, where his sister lived. He discharged his duties well in this job and led a more or less normal family life. Two sons, Siri Chand and Lakhmi Das, and probably a daughter, were born to him.

However, his greatest interest and attachment was always for things spiritual. From his early childhood he had been thinking and asking questions about the Creator and His ways, and about the reason and purpose of life. He was composing hymns from his earliest days and, at Sultanpur, a Muslim minister, Mardana, joined him. Both began singing these hymns together, and it became a life long association.

Nanak now began having mystic experiences and concrete ideas began to form in his mind about the mission of his life. It was at this time that he formulated his basic gospel—the *mool mantra*—of Sikhism :

"There is one God, the Supreme Truth, the Creator,
without fear and hate, omnipresent, not born,
not dying. You shall worship Him with His grace,
At the beginning of time there was truth, in the
course of time there is truth and for ever there
shall be truth". (Japji)

He conceived the righteous way of life as the praise of God (*nam*), honest labour (*Kirt*), charity (*dan*), ablution (*isnan*), service (*seva*) and prayer (*simran*) He left his family and, accompanied by Mardana, undertook vast peregrinations throughout the

length and breadth of India, and also probably some neighbouring countries, to spread his message. In all, he is believed to have undertaken four great tours to the East, West, South and North. During these travels, he visited holy places of both the religions and entered into discourses with many learned *pandits* and *maulvis*, *sadhus* and *fakirs*. He reformed many a sinner and spread his gospel of love and tolerance far and wide.

Ultimately, he settled with his family on the banks of the Ravi near Lahore. This place came to be known subsequently as Kartarpur. There he died in 1539, naming as his successor not any of his sons but a devout disciple, Lehna, renamed by him as Angad, who became the second Guru of the Sikhs. His son, Siri Chand, took to asceticism and founded the Udasi sect of the Sikhs.

Conceived and preached in an atmosphere created by Hindu *bhaktas* and Muslim *sufis*, Nanak's teaching sought to combine the best of the two. It was because of their inherent simplicity and transparent sincerity that they came to be universally revered. Oneness of God, superfluity of all ritualism, casteless society and a moral worldly life constitute the basis of the faith which he promoted,

Nanak's concept of God was that of an eternal truth, an abiding reality as against all falsehood. God was the father of all mankind, the great giver of all gifts and lover of all His devotees. He was to be praised in the abstract by name and not with the aid of any idols or material symbols.

Nanak did not claim prophethood for himself, but accepted only the status of a teacher—*guru*. Indeed, this institution of *guru* has come to be recognised as pivotal to his religion. Nine *gurus* succeeded Nanak and their collected words of wisdom and God's praise, in the shape of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, are regarded as a living mentor among the Sikhs. The

Granth includes the works of many other saints. Hindu as well as Muslim, and is a holy book respected by all.

From the principle of oneness of God and his conception as the Father of all creation and of all mankind flows the ideal of equality of man. Good or bad, high or low, in the words of Nanak, all of us are the children of the one God and are, therefore, brothers. It was because of this realisation that he preached for a casteless society. In order to demolish caste and its prejudices, Nanak initiated the custom of *guru ka langar*, i.e., the community kitchen where all, forgetting distinctions, have to sit together and partake of the common food. This institution is even now a regular feature at Sikh *gurudwaras*, and functions. The casteless character of the Sikh faith was subsequently symbolised in the form of four doors, one on each side, in the premier Sikh temple, the Harimandar Sahib of Amritsar. Sikhs are forbidden to recognise caste distinction in any form.

Nanak did not preach renunciation of family life to attain spiritual bliss. Though on many occasions, he himself had to leave his kith and kin, yet he led a complete family life and, during the last phase of his life, he settled down with his wife at Kartarpur, serving the community and preaching his ideals. Man, according to his teachings, should maintain his purity in the midst of all the impurities of life and society. He should lead a moral and truthful life and serve the society to the best of his ability. This principle of service, *sewa* is one of the basic tenets of the Sikh religion. He ruled out the ways of penance, rigid asceticism and celibacy for the attainment of salvation. The *madhya marg*, once preached by the Buddha, was adopted by Nanak in the form of his *sahaj marg* or the gradual way. His religion was for the masses, ordinary men and women living ordinary lives. Monastic austerity and renunciation were not approved by him.

It was these simple and straightforward principles which endeared Nanak to all the simple folks of the Punjab, They took to his religion in a big way and, indeed, thousands gave up their lives to preserve it.

Nanak's ways of preaching also were as gentle and as straightforward as his tenets. Sometimes they were novel too. There is a legend about his going to Hardwar, one of the foremost religious places of the Hindus. There, according to custom, the Hindus take water in their hands and, facing east, pour it to the morning sun in the name of their ancestors. Nanak also did the same but, instead of facing east, he faced west. The *pandas* flocked around him and mockingly asked as to what he thought he was doing. Nanak, in turn, asked what they were doing. The *pandas* replied that they were sending water to their ancestors. The Guru promptly rejoined that he was sending water to his parched fields in Kartarpur—much nearer than their ancestors. It was his way of telling the *pandas* that they were indulging only in ritualism.

There is another legend about his having gone to Mecca, the holiest place of the Muslims. There, at a place near the shrine, he fell asleep with his legs towards the mosque. The people around, naturally got angry and told him to turn his legs away from the shrine—the House of God, as they said. The Guru's retort was quite disarming. He said: "You may yourself put my legs towards a side where there is no God". This was another example of his characteristic way of telling the people that God is all-pervading and omnipresent.

There is a story about his refusing the rich feast of a local dignitary, Malik Bhago, and relying on the hospitality of a poor carpenter, Lalo. The rich man took it as an affront and the *guru* was promptly hauled up before him. There, according to the legend, he took the rich foods of the Malik in one hand and the poor morsels of the carpenter in the other

and squeezed both. Blood, it is said, oozed out of the rich food and milk out of the poor. What a way, indeed, to preach against exploitation and emphasise the worth of honest labour !

Nanak was a poet of great merit and is even now recognised to be the greatest poet Punjab has ever produced. Poetry and music are, in fact, integral parts of the system founded by him.

His teachings and his personality have a unique charm and his footprints on the sands of time are abiding. He is among the greatest sons Mother India has produced.

HABBA KHATOON

THE real fairy-tale of a sweet-throated village belle who became the queen of Kashmir happened four centuries ago. But time has not dulled the freshness of her songs or the melody of their music. She was Habba Khatoon, one of the most popular poets of Kashmir. Her poems are listened to with delight by all. There is hardly any programme of Kashmiri song and music, on the radio or elsewhere, in which her poems do not find a prominent place. Even today, her songs continue to delight thousands of people in Kashmir. It is not unoften that one comes across the boatman on the lake, the village cart-driver plying his rickety vehicle, the embroiderer weaving beautiful patterns, and the peasant sowing paddy shoots or picking saffron in the fragrant fields lightening the burden of his task by merrily humming one of the songs which are the treasured legacy from Habba Khatoon.

Habba Khatoon was christened as Zoon at her birth. This name is quite common among Hindus and Muslims in the valley even now. She retained it till her marriage with King Yusuf Shah Chak who ruled Kashmir from 1579 to 1589 A.D.

Zoon was born in an ordinary Muslim family at Chandahar, a village about 10 kilometres (6 miles) south-east of Pampor and about a kilometre east of the national highway. The Pampor *karewa*, between Sempor and Chandahar, is known for its saffron fields. It is the only place in the country where this highly prized flower is grown. But the most fragrant bloom produced by this tract was certainly Zoon or Habba Khatoon.

Little is known about the early life of our great poetess.

From one of her poems, however, it appears that one of her ancestors had enjoyed high status in his day. Her father, Abdul Rather, though perhaps not in affluent circumstances at that time, sent her to a *maktab* (school) where, besides studying the Quran, she also learnt some portions of the Persian poet Sadi's *Gullistan* and *Bostan*. These helped sharpen her latent poetic capacity. Gifted with a most melodious voice, this nightingale of Kashmir soon began to sing the verses of the Persian master and also the poems of the native Kashmiri poets. This, coupled with the beauty of her person, made her the cynosure of all eyes, particularly of the village youth. Accordingly, her parents decided to marry her off when she was only in her early teens.

Zoon, who was first married to an ordinary village youth, does not appear to have been particularly happy in her husband's home. For one thing, her husband was insensitive to the singular poetic gift with which Nature had endowed his pretty wife. Her singing also brought upon her the wrath of her parents-in-law. They thought it contrary to feminine modesty that their young daughter-in-law should sing even before strangers. Though singing was a passion with her, yet she did not neglect her household duties. She did what was required of her both inside the house and outside. She welcomed work outside her house, such as fetching water from the spring or stream, gathering herbs and roots or picking saffron from the fields. These afforded her an opportunity to indulge in her hobby of singing, often in the company of other village damsels and sometimes all by herself.

It was on one such occasion that she was discovered by her future husband, King Yusuf Shah Chak. One morning, when Zoon was working alone in her saffron fields, Yusuf Shah happened to pass that way. Out on a holiday excursion, he found the whole table-land overflowing with the melody of a

full-throated song. Soon, he espied the singer at some distance and made for her. Zoon was so engrossed in her work and her song that she hardly noticed him till he was almost before her.

Yusuf Shah was simply dazed when he beheld the bewitching beauty of the singer, who immediately recognized the king and made her obeisance. Then followed a dialogue in verse which is famous in Kashmiri literature. Here are portions of it :

Yusuf : "A village belle has come out spotlessly dressed, unmindful of the possibility of rain or risk."

Zoon : "Oh my lord, my king, rest assured, it will be sunny."

Yusuf : "Whose daughter are you, what is your profession and what is your name."

Zoon : "I am a peasant's daughter, tilling is our occupation and Zoon is my name."

Yusuf Shah, who had fallen in love with her at first sight, goes on :

"As the butterfly is attracted by the candle ; So I am charmed by you,"

Zoon was more than a match for him and retorts :

"The fear of getting burnt keep it (the butterfly) away.

That is why it does not join it."

The king who apparently did not like this retort replies :

"By voice a fairy, by face a moon; your heart is a stone."

Soon after, however, he proposes to her more directly by saying :

"O pretty damsel, your proper place is in the palace".

But Zoon was not to be won so easily; she replies :

"What will he do, whose spouse I am ?"

The king, however, persists. After assiduous supplication and ardent persuasion for many days, he succeeds in winning

her over. A divorce is swiftly arranged and Zoon becomes the cherished queen of the ruler of the realm.

Zoon, which in Kashmiri means 'moon', now adorned the royal household. Here, she received the name of Habba Khatoon, the name by which she is known to posterity.

Habba Khatoon's married life with Yusuf Shah Chak was the best period of her life. The two were very much devoted to each other. Their tastes and temperaments corresponded. Each took delight in making the other happy. While Habba regaled the king with her songs, the latter stood ready to meet every wish of his beloved queen. Himself a poet of some attainments, Yusuf arranged, for his talented wife, sessions with the leading singers and musicians of the day. He took her to all the beauty spots in the valley so that she may drink deep of the beauties of nature. It was in these exquisitely beautiful surroundings and in a mood of utter abandon and joy that Habba Khatoon's talent flowered into deeply romantic poetry. It was about this period that she wrote :

"I left my home for play, but returned not when the day sank in the west ; I came of noble parentage and made name as Habba Khatoon. I passed through crowds drawing tight my veil. But people flocked to see me, and ascetics hurried out of woods, when the day sank in the west".

But, alas !, the good fortune that had smiled on her so unexpectedly was not to last for all her life. The natural beauty of Kashmir had enthralled the heart of the Great Mughal, Akbar. After some unsuccessful attempts, he succeeded in annexing the valley in 1586 A.D. and Yusuf Shah was made a prisoner. Though he was released soon after and sent to Bihar as a provincial subedar, yet he was not allowed to return to Kashmir. Thus was brought to an abrupt end the romantic career of our royal poetess.

Habba Khatoon loved Yusuf dearly and could not bear this cruel separation. The world and its pleasures lost all meaning for her and she went almost mad with grief. Wandering about from place to place, she voiced the pangs of separation in verses which are now cherished gems of Kashmiri poetry. The one thought that consumed her like a flame was : "When would my love come back and be restored to me ?" As she herself says :

"Love has consumed me from within
He has cast me into a hot oven
And is burning me to cinder."

In another poem she says :

"In henna I dyed my hands,
When will he come ?
My love should come to me bedecked,
Come, still my craving,
I am dying for thee :
Without thee how shall I fill my days ?
I cannot endure separation from thee."

In yet another poem, she gives vent to a sense of hopeless frustration :

"Say friend, when will fate smile on me
And my love come to me again ? Say when ?
I have waited long and patiently."

Gulmarg, the charming place, where Habba Khatoon had spent many a happy and memorable day with her beloved husband, evokes this plaintive strain :

"The distant meadows are in bloom
Hast thou not heard my plaint ?
Flowers bloom on mountain lakes ;
Come, let us to the mountain meads ;
The lilac blooms in distant woods
Hast thou not heard my plaint ?"

Crazy with grief, Habba Khatoon ranged the meadows and glades of Kashmir in search of her lord, but in vain. The beautiful Gurez valley in the north of Kashmir where she spent a considerable part of her time enshrines her memory in the name of a handsome hillock named Habba Khatoon. She pined away and breathed her last at Panda Chok, a village situated about half-way between Srinagar and Pampor.

In the chapters on Lal Ded and Sheikh Nur-ud-din, we have seen how the early phase of Kashmiri poetry was dominated by philosophy and mysticism. It dwelt mostly on matters of the spirit and how man could attain salvation. But it was Habba Khatoon, together with another great Kashmiri poetess, Arinimal, who brought it close to the common people, their earthly experiences, their joys and sorrows, tears and laughter. Habba Khatoon's experiences and longings are of the earth. Her world is that of common people, of ordinary human beings and she sings of human love and its joys, of separation and its pangs. Her poetry mirrors the sweet memories of her childhood, the rich exuberance of her youth and the poignant strings of her cruel separation from her beloved.

AKBAR

HISTORY tells of many great emperors and kings who conquered and ruled over vast territories, but instances where they also ruled over the hearts of men are rare indeed. Akbar was one of these rare monarchs. He ruled over an empire extending from the Hindukush mountain in the west to the Brahmaputra river in the east, and from the Himalayas in the north to the Narmada river in the south. He had won the affection of his subjects to a great extent.

Jalal-ud-Din Mohammed Akbar was born during a time of adversity for his father, Humayun, the second king of the great Mughal dynasty founded by Babar. Humayun had been deprived of his territories by Sher Shah Suri and was fleeing to safety. Eventually, he reached Amarkot and it was there that Akbar was born on November 23 (October 15, according to some authorities), 1542.

Humayun continued the struggle against his enemies. After a bitter spell, he was able to recover a part of his lost territories. He reoccupied Delhi and Agra, defeating Sikander Sur in the battle of Sirhind in 1555. A few months later, before he could consolidate his gains, he died in 1556. At this time, only 13 years old Akbar was in the Punjab with his guardian Bairam Khan, an old associate of his father. It was there that he was proclaimed king in his father's place.

His position, however, was far from secure. Large tracts of his territories were still under the Pathans and, soon after Akbar's succession, Hemu, the capable Hindu general of Adil Shah Sur, challenged the Mughals. Having captured Agra and Delhi, he marched towards the Punjab, but met a decisive

defeat at the hands of Akbar at Panipat. After this battle, the Pathans were demoralised and Akbar's main rivals were either killed or they fled. The supremacy of the Mughals was now assured.

However, before Akbar could become the king in the real sense, he had to free himself from the hold of the ladies of the palace and from his guardian who was acting as the regent. In 1560, Bairam Khan was told to retire which he reluctantly did. He expressed his desire to go to Mecca on pilgrimage. While outwardly going there, he rebelled against the king. Akbar defeated him in battle, but later treated him with generosity. Bairam Khan was pardoned and allowed to proceed to Mecca. On his way, however, he was stabbed to death by an old enemy. With his end, another potential menace to Akbar was finally eliminated. After this, he got rid of Adam Khan, son of his foster-mother, who was behaving in a hostile manner and was fast developing into a new menace.

Having assumed full control of the government and freeing himself of *harem* influences, Akbar set upon his long career of conquests and glory. During the next forty years, he was able to extend his empire to nearly the whole of northern and central India. He made adequate arrangements to safeguard his frontiers and was able to give a stable and peaceful administration to the millions of his subjects.

It was, however, neither his conquests nor the extent of his empire that made his name one of the greatest in world history. His high and noble ideals were responsible for winning him this place. His magnanimity, his tolerance, his benevolence and his statesmanship endeared him to friends and foes alike. Indeed, in many cases, he pardoned even his bitterest enemies. After the battle of Panipat, Sikandar Sur, one of his chief opponents, had surrendered himself to Akbar. Instead of being put to death in the accepted way of those times, he was

pardoned and granted a fief in the eastern provinces. Indeed there are numerous instances of Akbar's generosity and nobility of heart, starting from Bairam Khan and ending with Salim, his own son who rebelled against him in the last phase of Akbar's life.

Akbar ruled over a population which was overwhelmingly of a faith other than his own. He realised, early in his life, that to rule well he must enlist the willing cooperation of his Hindu subjects. By his wise and liberal policies, he was able to win the hearts of most of them. With the Rajputs he established a close personal alliance by marrying Raja Man Singh's sister, Jodha Bai. Indeed, in the expansion and consolidation of his empire, the Rajputs played a major role with their traditions of valour and honour. Many of his generals and highest courtiers were Rajputs. This relationship was so well fostered by him that it continued for many generations even after his time. Hindus occupied high places in the official hierarchy. Raja Todar Mal, his able Revenue Minister and trusted general reorganised the whole land revenue system on an enduring basis and is remembered to this day. In most of the major military campaigns, Hindu and Muslim generals were sent together. Thus the imperial invasion of Mewar was led by Man Singh of Amber and Asaf Khan; Bhagwan and Kasim Khan were deputed to conquer Kashmir; Raja Todar Mal and prince Murad were sent to subdue the Yusufzais on the north-western frontier and so forth.

Though a Sunni Muslim by birth, Akbar was never rigid in religious matters. In his boyhood days, he came into contact with Sufis, and their liberal outlook had much to do with Akbar's own views on religious matters. He created and maintained a climate of tolerance and harmony throughout his reign. He abolished the pilgrim tax and the *jaziya* levy on Hindus soon after his assumption of full powers and gave generous

grants of land and money for all religious denominations and institutions. No discrimination was observed in any sphere of life, and in matters of state strict secularism was maintained.

At his capital, Fatchpur Sikri, near Agra, he built an *Ibadat-Khana* or house of worship where learned men of all religions gathered and took part in debates and discourses. Akbar listened keenly to whatever was said, and tried to assimilate the best of each. He was so sympathetic to all that everybody, including the Christian Portuguese, harboured the illusion that the great emperor was about to be converted to their respective faiths. Akbar, of course, had other ideas. He was trying to sort out the best in all religions and to integrate it in a new faith which he called the *Din-e Ilahi*.

Though formally illiterate, Akbar had a keen intellect and a deep interest in literature and philosophy. Learned men like Abul Fazal and poets like Faizi were among his closest friends and prominent in his court. Persian as well as Hindi poetry flourished in his day. The most notable Hindi poets of his day were Tulsi Das, Sur Das, Abdul Rahim Khan-i-Khana, Raskhan and Birbal. He patronised all the fine arts, and Tansen, the great master of music, is remembered to this day.

A new style of architecture, combining the best features of the Hindu and Islamic styles, developed during his period. This amalgamated style is called by the name of Mughal architecture. He built some beautiful buildings at Agra and elsewhere. The construction of his new capital city of Fatchpur Sikri took eleven years. Though it is a deserted place now, it stands as a great monument to the excellent taste and architectural brilliance of its builder. Akbar built three gigantic forts—at Agra, Lahore and Allahabad—and they have many magnificent buildings conceived by him.

People were remarkably well-off during Akbar's reign.. There were few famines and things were remarkably cheap, so

much so that readers in our times will hardly believe they were so. Wheat was sold at 12 maunds a rupee, moong at 18 maunds, mash at 16 maunds, salt at 16 maunds, mutton at 17 seers and milk at 44 seers. The labourers, skilled and unskilled, got enough to live comfortably and everybody had enough to eat. Commerce and trade flourished and all kinds of crafts thrived. Farmers were also happy under the well-organised revenue system, and many welfare measures were taken by the State for the masses. Justice was cheap and easy to get and the crime rate was low.

Akbar died on the 17th of October, 1605, as a result of severe diarrhoea or dysentery. His last days were rather unhappy because of his son Salim's rebellion. Salim succeeded him under the name Jehangir.

Akbar's supreme qualities of head and heart, his outstanding ability as a statesman and the traditions of tolerance and co-existence which he promoted made him a truly national and benevolent ruler of our country. Akbar's name is rightly grouped with such illustrious names in Indian history as Ashoka and Vikramaditya.

TIPU SULTAN

"IT is far better to live for two days like a lion than for two hundred years like a lamb." These brave words came from the lips of Tipu Sultan, the famed martyr in the cause of freedom. His own life proved the truth of this statement. He fought like a lion against the British for preserving our country's freedom and died like a lion on the battle-field. The epitaph on his tomb describes him as the 'king of martyrs' (Shah-e-Shahidan) and is a fitting tribute to his memory.

His father, Haider Ali, too, was a formidable foe of the British. The ruling dynasty started by Haider ended with his son Tipu, but their names gave inspiration to the people of India for many generations in their struggle for freedom. In fact, Haider did not belong to a noble family, nor was he an educated person. His sword was his pride and his natural intelligence was his scholarship. In these respects, he can be compared to Maharaja Ranjit Singh of the Punjab.

Born in 1721, in an ordinary Muslim family, Haider grew up as a mercenary soldier and entered the service of the ruler of Mysore. By his ability, he soon became a petty commander. In those days, the State of Mysore was torn by intrigues and two ministers had made the Hindu king a puppet in their hands and were ruling on his behalf. Haider, with his army, helped one minister against the other and captured power for himself. He kept the king a virtual prisoner and ruled in his name. When Haider died in 1782, Tipu assumed the formal title of Sultan.

Haider was a military genius, an able administrator and a benevolent ruler. He treated both the Hindus and Muslims

alike. He used to seek the blessings of both the Hindu and Muslim holy men before embarking on any military campaign. He was merciless towards corrupt officials and even his sons could not escape his wrath if they committed any wrong. Though illiterate, Haider had an amazing memory and could speak five languages fluently.

Haider spent most of his lifetime in battles. He clearly saw that the English, who were annexing one territory after another, were a formidable menace to India's independence. In opposing the English, he tried to form an alliance with the two other major powers of South India—the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Marathas. However, these two were themselves afraid of Haider. As a result, the Nizam became a tool in the hands of the English, while the Marathas were always unpredictable. The British recognised Haider, and later, Tipu, as their main enemy in the south. Being a military genius, Haider understood that the strongpoint of the English was their navy. He therefore sought the assistance of the French who were the rivals of the English. He also started building up a navy of his own.

Tipu used to accompany Haider to the battlefield since his fifteenth year. This gave him rich experience in the art of war but deprived him of regular schooling. He, however, managed to learn Persian, Kannada and Urdu. Tipu had learnt from personal experience that the English were the greatest menace to India and he hated them even more than his father.

The first war between Haider and the English in 1759, was provoked by the mischief of the latter. They concluded a military agreement with the Nizam directed against Haider. Enraged at this, Haider marched his army into the Nizam's territory and forced the Nizam to join him in opposing the English. He also made peace with the Maratha chief who was repeatedly attacking some districts of Mysore.

Meanwhile, a British contingent had been despatched to support the Nizam. It found the combined army of Haider and the Nizam opposing it. The Nizam, however, once again changed sides and made a separate treaty with the English. This did not dishearten Haider. He attacked the British force and put it to flight. Haider overran the Carnatic and his cavalry reached the outskirts of Madras city. The British were panic-stricken and did not know what to do. Knowing that Haider could easily capture Madras, they concluded a humiliating peace treaty with the Mysore ruler. They surrendered some territories to Haider and agreed that the two parties should be friends and help each other in case of any war.

To mark this brilliant victory, Haider is said to have ordered a painting to be made depicting the English Governor of Madras and his councillors kneeling before himself (Haider).

A British officer was depicted as an elephant's trunk, pouring gold coins at the feet of the victor. The English commander, Smith, was portrayed as holding the treaty in his hand and breaking his sword into two. On hearing the news of this defeat, the directors of the East India Company in London remarked that it would take a very long time for the English to regain their credit and dignity in India.

Even though the British had made a treaty of friendship with Haider, they had no intention of remaining faithful to it. The next year, Mysore was again attacked by the Marathas and Haider called for British help in accordance with the terms of the treaty. The British, however, did not respond. This perfidy on the part of the English made Haider their bitter enemy and he decided to punish them at the proper time.

The British themselves hastened the second war with Haider by capturing the port of Mahe which was under Haider's protection. Another British force marched through

Haider's territory without his permission. Haider immediately made arrangements for invading the British territory. He drew the Marathas and the Nizam into an alliance, obtained French naval assistance along the sea-coast and descended on the plains of the Carnatic in 1780 with an army of about 90,000 men. Tipu, who was eighteen years old, and his brother Karim accompanied their father on this expedition.

Like a thunderstorm, Haider's cavalry raged through the Carnatic and began heading towards Madras city. All along the route, the British did not dare resist his onslaught. At long last, a British force under the command of Baillie marched to meet his advance. Haider sent Tipu to intercept him and a fierce battle took place at a place called Palur. The English force was surrounded and routed. Baillie waved his white handkerchief and surrendered. The British had never before suffered such a defeat. A French officer, who was with Haider, wrote, "There is not in India any example of a similar defeat."

The Madras treasury was empty and there were no supplies in the town. If Haider had attacked it, he could have easily captured it. But he directed his attention to Arcot where the English Captain John Dupont and Muhammad Ali, the Nawab of the Carnatic, surrendered to him. The whole province was overrun. Tipu scored another major victory over the English at Cuddalore. He was later sent by Haider to defend the western borders of Mysore.

On hearing the news of the defeat at Palur, Warren Hastings, the English Governor General, suspended the Governor of Madras. He ordered a large amount of money and an army under the senior-most English general, Sir Eyre Coote, to be sent to Madras. Further, Hastings detached the Nizam and the Marathas from their alliance with Haider. At the Porto Novo, in 1781, Eyre Coote attacked Haider's forces

and pushed him back. It was not a major defeat since Haider had withdrawn his troops in order, but it checked his onward march towards Madras city. Some more battles ensued in which victory changed hands. About this time (1782), Haider Ali died. Tipu Sultan, who succeeded Haider, continued the war for some time. His principal allies, the French, concluded a peace treaty with the British. This was a blow to Tipu who thought that instead of continuing an indecisive war single-handed, it would be better to come to terms with the English. The Treaty of Mangalore was signed in 1784, according to which both sides gave up the conquered territories.

The British, however, did not prove faithful to this treaty also. Soon, the Marathas and the Nizam attacked Tipu's territory and the British, instead of going to his help as per the treaty, indirectly supported his enemies. Further, Cornwallis, the new British Governor-General, started making preparations for a fullscale war against Tipu. Foreseeing the danger, Tipu also started preparing himself. He sent a mission to the Turkish Sultan and another to the French Emperor. These monarchs were very friendly towards Tipu, but could not give him any active assistance. The English considered these foreign contacts of Tipu very dangerous to their security and determined to cut him quickly. In order to unite the other Indian rulers against Tipu, Cornwallis made a military alliance with the Nizam, the Raja of Travancore and some others. A British historian has described this alliance as a conspiracy of dacoits to destroy a real king.

Tipu clearly saw that the alliance was aimed against him and so decided to strike the first blow. He invaded Travancore, an ally of the English, in 1789. Using it as a pretext, the British army marched into Mysore from two directions. The Nizam's forces also accompanied them and the

Marathas joined them later. In spite of trying for full one year, the British commanders could not achieve any success against Tipu. Then, Cornwallis himself took over command of the English forces and, after a hard struggle for one more year, he succeeded in overpowering Tipu. Srirangapatnam, the capital of Tipu was besieged. As total defeat threatened him, Tipu had to sign a treaty—the Treaty of Srirangapatnam (Seringapatnam)—with the English. According to the treaty, Tipu gave up half his territory and agreed to pay a sum of 330 lakh rupees to the English. Tipu paid most of the money immediately, but had to hand over his two young sons as hostages for the rest of the amount. He was able to pay the balance within two years.

In spite of this big defeat, Tipu was not disheartened. He never thought of becoming a stooge of the British like the Nizam, in order to save his kingdom. The defeat only strengthened his resolve to drive out the British from India and he started making active preparations for the final show-down. He negotiated with the Marathas, the King of Afghanistan and the French for an alliance against the British. The Marathas were not, of course, favourably disposed towards him.

In order to help the anti-British forces, King Shah Zeman of Afghanistan marched into India with his army in 1797. He captured Lahore and the British were panic-stricken. If the Afghan king had continued his march to Delhi, all the English armies would have gone to the North and Tipu could have ended their power in South India. But unluckily for Tipu, Shah Zeman had to hurry back home in 1798 to guard his country against a Persian invasion.

Tipu had sent a secret mission to the French Governor of Mauritius. The Governor gave a public reception to it and also issued a proclamation for volunteers to serve under Tipu. This public display spoiled Tipu's plan and alerted the British. In

1799, Napoleon Bonaparte, the great French conqueror, wrote a letter to Tipu from Egypt saying that he was "full of the desire of releasing you from the iron yoke of the English," and asking Tipu to send him an agent. Soon, however, Napoleon was himself cut off from Egypt by the English forces, nullifying his plans for pushing the English out of India.

Tipu was thus left alone. Alarmed by his foreign contacts, the British made preparations for finally destroying him. Lord Wellesley, the new Governor-General, made the Nizam agree to the stationing of a British force in his kingdom. The Marathas also agreed to join the British against the Mysore Sultan. Wellesley now sent an ultimatum to Tipu demanding an explanation for his contacts with the French and asking him to disarm immediately. Tipu did not comply with these demands and sent an evasive reply.

In February 1799, the British marched into Mysore from two directions. They were well prepared, the Nizam and the Marathas supported them and some traitors in Tipu's own army also helped them. The British were, therefore, able to make quick progress and, unable to check them, Tipu retreated to his fortress of Srirangapatnam. The British besieged and took it by assault in May 1799. Tipu did not despair and never thought of surrendering. He made a gallant stand at the northern gateway of the fort. At last, he was seriously wounded and his followers laid him inside a palanquin. One of the English soldiers entering the fortress tried to snatch the jewelled sword-belt of Tipu, but the dying lion struck and wounded the English soldier. Tipu Sultan was killed by a bullet fired by this soldier.

The body of Tipu was extricated from a heap of corpses and was honourably buried the next day by the side of his father. The British troops plundered the town and the atrocities committed by them were condemned by the British com-

mander himself. The members of Tipu's family were removed to Vellore, in the Madras Presidency, and interned there. After annexing some territories, Wellesley handed over the rest of the Mysore kingdom to a descendant of the Hindu royal family whom Haider Ali had overthrown. The British Parliament congratulated Wellesley for establishing a permanent basis for the British Empire in India.

Thus ended the life of an ardent patriot whose only desire was to drive out the British invaders from his country. This thought haunted him even while he was asleep. This is revealed by a book in the Persian language in which Tipu has recorded some of his dreams. In one dream he says, "The *Nazerenes* should be expelled from India."

Since Tipu was an uncompromising enemy of the British, the latter hated and feared him. An English priest has written that British mothers used to mention the name of Tipu in order to silence their crying children. Many British historians have maligned Tipu as a religious fanatic who persecuted the Hindus and a tyrant who oppressed his subjects. In some areas like Malabar, Tipu took strong measures against a turbulent people, but these were not due to religious fanaticism but were taken for a military and political necessity. Tipu was otherwise tolerant for to the Hindus. His minister, Purnaiya, was a Hindu. Tipu used to request Brahmins to pray at times of danger and made rich gifts to Hindu temples.

The letters of Tipu Sultan to the then Jagad-guru Shankaracharya of Sringeri bear witness to his spirit of tolerance. In one of his letters he writes :

"...we request you, along with the other Brahmins of the mutt, to pray to God, so that all the enemies may suffer defeat and take to flight and all the people of our country live happily and to send us your blessings."

When Maratha horsemen looted the mutt and pulled out the image of Godless Sharada, Tipu immediately sent a substantial sum of money for the consecration of the image and for feeding the Brahmins on the occasion. He also took strong action against the Marathas and sent a battalion of soldiers to guard the mutt. In a letter to the Jagad-guru on that occasion, Tipu Sultan wrote, "Treachery to gurus will undoubtedly result in the destruction of the line of descent". In another letter to the Swami he wrote, "You are always performing penance in order that the world may prosper and that the people may reside, that country will flourish with good showers and crops".

Even when Tipu Sultan was under strong pressure from the English, his subjects did not revolt against him. This shows their love for him. Moreover, the British themselves have testified that the peasants in Tipu's kingdom were much more prosperous than in their (British) own territory.

As mentioned earlier, Tipu knew three languages. He had a spirit of innovation and curiosity. He tried to reform the Muslim calendar and introduced new scales of weights and measures and a new system of coinage. He was also anxious to introduce western science in his kingdom. He possessed a valuable library which was later removed by the British to Calcutta. His military genius caused dismay to many a British general. The speed of his movements and the rapidity with which he changed his fronts completely outwitted them.

If in spite of all these qualities, Tipu Sultan fell, it was because of forces beyond his control. The British had a better-trained and better equipped army and navy, employed a cunning strategy and had the support of other Indian rulers. Tipu fought, quite successfully, against such heavy odds till his last breath. His bravery and patriotism have ensured for him an

honoured place in history. His memory was a source of inspiration all through our struggle for independence and will continue to remain so in preserving our hard-won freedom against any foreign threat.

TYAGARAJA

YOU must have read in your history book about King Harsha who ruled over Kashmir some nine centuries ago. One of his good deeds was to bring the arts of the other parts of India into Kashmir. He invited masters of Karnatic music from the far south and asked them to give lessons to the musicians of Kashmir. Already proficient in North Indian music, they now learnt Karnatic music too. These two systems of music are the warp and woof of the fabric called 'Indian Music'.

Among the composers of Karnatic music, three were the most famous. They were Tyagaraja, Shyama Sastri and Muthuswami Dikshitar. Tyagaraja was the greatest of the three.

In Tyagaraja's compositions, we find a unique combination of music, poetry and spiritualism. He was a gifted singer and sang his own compositions to the accompaniment of his *Veena*. He considered music as a form of worship and said in one of his songs : "Knowledge of the science of music conduces to bliss divine."

Saint Tyagaraja was a prolific composer. He has left a rich heritage for nearly 700 precious songs in about 270 ragas, besides two excellent operas, "Prahlada Bhakti Vijayam" and "Nowka Charitam." His songs are as popular today as they were during his life-time, two hundred years ago.

Tyagaraja belonged to a Telugu family which had settled in Tiruvarur, in Tanjavur district of Tamilnad. It is an important place of pilgrimage. The two other great composers, Shyama Sastri and Muthuswami Dikshitar, were also natives of Tiruvarur. The name of Tyagaraja's father was Rama Brahmam, and of his mother, Santamma or according to some, Sitamma. It

is said that the presiding deity of Tiruvarur temple, called Tyagaraja, appeared to Rama Brahman in a dream and told him that a great luminary in music and poetry would be born to him and that he should be named 'Tyagaraja.'

Tyagaraja was born on May 4, 1767. He was the third child of Rama Brahman. His elder brother was called Panchapakesan, also known as Jalpesan. Ramanathan, the other brother, had died young.

When Tyagaraja was seven years old, his family moved to the nearby village of Tiruvaiyar where his father had bought a house. The *Upanayanam* (sacred-thread ceremony) of Tyagaraja took place in his eighth year. Married at the age of 18, Tyagaraja had only one child, a daughter named Sitalakshmi.

Tyagaraja's ancestors were noted for their literary and musical talents. He studied Telugu and Sanskrit under his father's guidance and became a learned scholar in these languages. Later, he composed his songs in Telugu. He took his first lessons in music from his mother who was a good singer. Because of natural interest in music, he had studied all the available works on music quite early in life. This knowledge enabled him to create many new *ragas* or musical modes and compose splendid songs in them.

Even as a school boy, Tyagaraja used to compose songs and scribble them on the walls of his house. Seeing them, great scholars of the time said that he was a musical genius. As a boy, he used to go near the house of Sonti Venkataramma Iya, a musician, and listen to the music lessons given by him to his pupils. Sonti was a musician at the court of King Sarabhoji of Tanjavur. Rama Brahman noticed his son's keen interest in music and requested Sonti to take him as his pupil. Sonti readily agreed. Within a year, Tyagaraja had learnt all that his *guru* could teach.

Tyagaraja learnt one more thing which he considered the

most precious gift. It was *Rama nama*, the name of Lord Rama. One Swami Haridas had advised him to recite *Rama nama* 96 crores of times. Tyagaraja started it in right earnest and completed the task in 21 years. It is said that he had the *darshan* of Lord Rama several times during this period. His songs reveal divine inspiration.

Tyagaraja started his career when there were many famous musicians in Tanjavur. The court of Raja Sarabhoji itself had 360 of them. Tyagaraja did not join the royal court, nor did he seek the patronage of any rich or powerful man. He was content to compose beautiful songs and sing them in front of Rama's image in his house. He would also sing them while he went along the streets begging for alms. He used to do this once a week and he obtained enough to maintain his family and the ever-increasing number of his Pupils and guests.

Tyagaraja never cared for wealth or status. He considered his music and mental peace as the greatest of joys. In one of his songs he says: "Without peace of mind there is no bliss. Whether he is a man of wealth or a philosopher, whether he is blessed with wife, children and material wealth or whether he has performed *japa* and *tapa* to all alike, without peace, there is no bliss." He did not attach much value to any other spiritual path, except that of simple devotion to God. "When there is the royal road of Rama *bhakti* leading to eternal bliss, why seek the bye-lanes?", he asks in a song.

Tyagaraja's elder brother, who was a man of the world, did not like all this. Jalpesan wanted that his brother should care for the family and should earn money through his music. One day, when Tyagaraja rejected an invitation from Raja Sarabhoji to sing in his court and receive a gift of 50 acres of land a big jar of gold Jalpesan became mad with rage. He burst forth, "Is your Rama *bhajan* going to feed your stomach or clothe your body?" In reply to this, Tyagaraja sang the

famous song, "*Nidhi Chala Sukhama ?*" in which he asked himself: "Tell me in truth, O mind, is treasure more highly gratifying than the enjoyment of the presence of the Lord ? Does the praise of Rama conduce to greater bliss or the praise of mortal man who is just a mass of pride and conceit ?....."

Jalpesan was not deterred by this. He continued his efforts to cure his brother of his 'malady.' One day he stole Tyagaraja's idol of Rama and threw it into the Kaveri river. When Tyagaraja found his dear *murti* missing, his sorrow knew no bounds. For two months, he suffered great mental agony and, in that mood, he sang some of his most moving songs. At last, in a dream he saw the exact place where the image was lying. He went to that place, found his idol and started singing in great ecstasy.

Except for Jalpesan and a few other jealous persons of the locality, all others praised and venerated Tyagaraja. His fame spread throughout the country. Many distinguished persons came from far and near to his humble dwelling to see his inspiring personality and hear his divine music. Tyagaraja was a thin and tall person, with a fair complexion. He had a saintly face, and was always dignified in his speech. He did not bear any hatred toward anybody, even towards his tormentors. He wore his greatness with humility and was easily accessible to all.

Raja Sarabhoji, who had failed in his efforts to bring Tyagaraja to his court, sent his messengers to secretly drop gold coins into the begging bowl of Tyagaraja. His intention was to help the poor singer, but Tyagaraja would not accept them. He felt that the coins had contaminated the rice in the vessel and so emptied the whole thing on the road and went on his way. The noble king, instead of getting offended by

Tyagaraja's behaviour, understood his greatness and himself went to the saint's house to pay homage to him.

Another ruler, Maharaja Svati Tirunal of Travancore, also tried to persuade Tyagaraja to come to his court. Svati Tirunal was himself a great musical composer and he sent his court musician, Vadivelu, to Tiruvaiyar to persuade Tyagaraja to pay a visit to his Kingdom. Tyagaraja was captivated by Vadivelu's music, and went out of his way to praise him. He also praised the royal composer, but politely refused to go to Trivandrum.

One of the musical luminaries who visited Tyagaraja was Gopinath Bhattacharya of Varanasi. After seeing the saint Gopinath said that his greatest ambition had been fulfilled. Tyagaraja was so moved by his affection that he burst forth into a song.

Tumu Narasimha Dasa, a prominent composer in Telugu and Sanskrit, came from Andhra to see Tyagaraja. He was thrilled by the saint's singing and expressed his joy in a poem : "I felt an experience which is not within the reach of even Brahma...I feel if I were swimming in the ocean of celestial bliss."

One morning a *sanyasi* came to Tyagaraja's house and listened to his music. Leaving a bundle behind him, he said he would return for his meal after a bath in the Kaveri river. Tyagaraja waited and waited but there was no trace of the guest. He fasted the whole day and, in the night, it is said, the *sanyasi* appeared in Tyagaraja's dream and said that he was the divine musician, Narada, and that he came to present Tyagaraja with some rare musical treatises, which were in the bundle.

Tyagaraja was the greatest composer of his time, but he never failed to appreciate the talents of others. On hearing that one Swaminatha Iyer was an expert in singing in the

Anandabhairavi raga, Tyagaraja went to hear him and mixed himself with the crowd. Captivated by Iyer's singing, he could not contain himself and rushed towards the stage and congratulated him. Iyer was overwhelmed by this honour and, to mark that great occasion, he requested Tyagaraja not to compose any more song in the *Anandabhairavi raga*.

One day, a pupil named Kuppayyer took the master's *veena* in his absence and started playing on it. Tyagaraja, who had returned in the meanwhile, was thrilled to hear the music and went inside to congratulate the performer. Kuppayyer begged his guru to forgive him, but Tyagaraja had nothing but praise and affection for him.

Tyagaraja spent most of his life-time in Tiruvaiyar itself. When he was about 67 years old, he started on a short pilgrimage at the request of his admirers and disciples. After visiting Kancheepuram, he went to the famous pilgrim centre of Tirupati. When he came near the *sanctum sanctorum* of Lord Venkateswara, he was disappointed to see a curtain preventing him from having *darshan* of the deity. In great humility, he sang a song expressing his feeling. When he concluded the song, it is said, the curtain fell asunder. He had the *darshan* of the Lord and expressed his joy in another song.

On his way from Tirupati Tyagaraja happened to pass by a place called Puttur. There he saw a crowd gathered round the dead body of a man who was a pilgrim and had died in a drowning accident. His wife and child were weeping and wailing. Moved by this sight, Tyagaraja asked his disciples to sing his Kriti "Na Jivadhara" (O, the breath of my life) in *Bilahari raga* and sprinkled *Tulsi* water on the dead body. Immediately, it is said, the dead man came back to life as if waking from sleep. It is believed that *Bilahari raga* itself is a life-giver.

In the course of Tyagaraja's pilgrimage, another interesting incident took place. One devotee had placed a bag containing 100 gold coins in Tyagaraja's palanquin without his knowledge. The party had to pass through a jungle in the night and some thieves started pursuing it. When the disciples whispered the fact into Tyagaraja's ears, he prayed to God through a song: "Oh Ram, the slayer of Mura and Khara, come quickly with Lakshman to our rescue." It is said that immediately two lads appeared on the scene and rained arrows on the robbers who ran for their lives in flight. At dawn, the thieves came and paid homage to Tyagaraja and left with his blessings.

After completing his pilgrimage, Tyagaraja returned to Tiruvaiyar and spent the rest of his life in the same old way—composing and singing divine songs. When he was almost 80 years old, he, one day told his admirers that Lord Rama had promised to take him back the next day—Pushya Bahula Panchami day (January 6, 1847)—at 11 a.m. On the morning of his last day on earth, he composed two beautiful songs. He then sat in *Yoga samadhi* and left his mortal body.

A shrine was built at the place of Tyagaraja's *Samadhi* and a great festival is celebrated there every year on the Pushya Bahula Panchami day. The *samadhi* has become a place of pilgrimage for musicians, music lovers and devotees.

RAMMOHUN ROY

IN history, individuals have often served as bridges over which nations have marched from one era to another. Rammohun Roy was one such individual. He lived and worked in a particularly dark period in the chequered history of this country. By his hard work and vision, he helped in mitigating to some extent the gloom that pervaded Indian society all round. He released forces of enlightenment which, in course of time, developed into a mighty current and set the country on the path of social progress and modernity. As such Rammohun Roy is rightly called the "Father of Indian Renaissance."

Rammohun Roy was born on May 22, 1772 in a small village in Bengal. His father, Ramkanta Roy, was an orthodox Brahmin. The child had his elementary education in the village school and also learnt some Persian under a *maulvi*. He was later sent to Patna which was then a centre of Islamic learning. There, he studied Arabic and Persian and became well-versed in Islamic theology and various sciences of the day. It was during his stay at Patna that he developed the habit of rational thinking.

On his return from there, he wrote a treatise on idolatry and superstitious beliefs prevalent in the Hindu society. This enraged his orthodox father so much that Rammohun was forced to leave his home. He then wandered from place to place, learning from everywhere what ever he could. During these peregrinations, he visited Tibet. There also, he could not restrain himself from criticising Buddhist idolatry and the lamas drove him away. After some years, Rammohun went to Varanasi where he stayed for a long time and studied Hindu

philosophy.¹ Meanwhile, in 1803, his father passed away and Rammohun shifted to Murshidabad. There, he wrote his famous treatise on monotheism, *Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin*, in Persian with an introduction in Arabic. In this book, he emphasised the basic oneness of all religions and urged a rational approach to religion. He also stressed the necessity for a comparative study of all religions.

About this time, Rammohun took a job in the Revenue Department of the East India Company. After serving at a number of places he resigned in 1814 and settled in Calcutta. During all these years, he continued his spiritual quest and made a thorough study of Tantric Muslim and Jain literature. He was now fully equipped to take up his life's mission, which was to salvage the best in Indian thought and to harmonise it with the modern ideas of the West.

In 1815, he published a Bengali translation of the Vedanta and wrote many other treatises. In the same year, he founded an association called 'Atmiya Sabha' with the object of agitating against various social vices prevalent in the Hindu society. This Sabha faced tough opposition from various orthodox elements and came to an end in 1819. Rammohun Roy, however, carried on his work through his writings.

In 1821, the Calcutta Unitarian Association was founded under his guidance and financial support. The objects of this Association included the spread of education and countering of ignorance and superstition. At this time, he entered into a bitter controversy with an aggressive batch of Christian missionaries. Rammohun started publishing two journals—the *Bramhan Sebadhi* in Bengali and the *Brahminical Magazine* in English. Through these, he fought against the onslaught of the missionaries. He also brought out a number of pamphlets during this period. His writings were always logical and

dignified and they were highly appreciated in the liberal circles of Europe and America.

The Unitarian Association also withered away in course of time and, in 1828, the Brahma Sabha was inaugurated in Calcutta. This was meant to be a meeting ground for adherents of all religions. Rammohun himself drew up a trust-deed for the Sabha, which was remarkable for its universalism and catholicity of approach. The Brahma Sabha functioned for some years according to the principles set down by its founder. After his death, it mutated into the Brahmo Samaj which was a society only of the reformist Hindus. The Brahmo Samaj developed into a virtually separate religion.

✓ In 1830, Rammohun sailed for England, reaching there on April 8, 1831. The object of his visit to England was three fold: to submit a memorandum to the British King on behalf of Akbar II, the then Emperor of Delhi; to present a memorial to the House of Commons for the abolition by law of the custom of *Sati*; and to be present on the spot during the discussion in the House of Commons on the renewal of the East India Company's Charter. The Emperor of Delhi had bestowed on him, as his emissary, the title of 'Raja' which was recognised by the British.

In England, he met distinguished Englishmen and had political and philosophical discussions with them. He was also received by the British King. The Indian Reform Bill was passed while Rammohun Roy was still in England and he was highly pleased with the success of his efforts. ✓

Rammohun Roy was a great admirer of France and he was himself well-known and respected in French intellectual circles. In 1832, he visited Paris and had an audience with the French King. Earlier, in 1824, he had received the distinction of being made an Associate-Correspondent of the Societe Asiatique of France.

All this hectic activity had an adverse effect on his health. Meanwhile, he found that his financial resources had almost dried up. This was a great shock to him and his health completely broke down. He suddenly fell ill and on September 27, 1833 passed away while staying with a friend in Bristol.

| Rammohun Roy's work had a great impact on Indian society which was aroused from the slumber of centuries. He was a reformist *par excellence* and throughout his life he fought against social and religious bigotry and evils. He had been instrumental in the abolition of the cruel Hindu custom of *Sati*, whereby widows were burnt alive on the pyres of their dead husbands. He also fought for the emancipation of women and the spread of education among them. Through his efforts, a number of schools and other educational institutions were opened and the British rulers were prevailed upon to start the teaching of English and of science in India. |

He was a pioneer journalist and started a new trend of prose writing in Bengali. As a matter of fact, he is recognised as the father of modern Bengali literature.

He was a seeker of universal value and was the first intellectual to make a comparative study of the four world religions—Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and Christianity. He preached tolerance and forbearance in religious matters and did everything in a practical way to give shape to his ideals.

✓ Rammohun Roy was one of the first Indians with enlightened political and economic ideas. He worked in these fields tirelessly, creating a healthy consciousness among his countrymen. His views were remarkably modern for his times and the India of to-day bears the mark of his vision to a very great extent. ✓

MIRZA GHALIB

MIRZA ASAD ULLAH BEG KHAN GHALIB has been one of the greatest literary figures of the modern age. His works show that, apart from having a distinct style of his own, he had a deep understanding of human nature. His poetry, both in Persian and in Urdu, is not only captivating and musical, but also helps one achieve a measure of equanimity which is difficult to achieve. His wit and sense of humour add to the lustre of his poetry and there is no gainsaying the fact that Ghalib is to the lovers of Urdu what Shakespeare is to the lovers of English literature.

On December 27, 1797, Izzat-un-Nisa Begum, wife of Abdullah Beg Khan, a Moghul warrior, gave birth to a son at Agra. In later life, this child was to shine in the firmament of world literature under the name of 'Ghalib'. Asad Ullah Beg Khan alias Mirza Nosha was the full name given to the child. He later added 'Ghalib' as his nomde-plume when he started composing verses.

He came of an illustrious family tracing its lineage to the earliest rulers of Iran, some of whom later settled in Turkistan. Due to some domestic troubles, Ghalib's grandfather, Quoqan Beg Khan, had to leave Samarkand. He came to India in search of a new home and fortune. After having served Nawab Main-ul-malik of Lahore for some time, Quoqan Beg moved to Delhi to serve Emperor Shah Alam. In Delhi were born Quoqan Beg's four sons and three daughters, one of whom was Ghalib's father, Mirza Abdullah Beg Khan.

Abdullah Beg Khan was married to Izzat-un-Nisa Begum, the daughter of Khwaja Ghulam Hussain Khan Kamendan, a

high official serving the Maratha rulers of Meerut. Abdullah Beg himself, however, did not occupy any high office in his life. After a brief spell of service in the court of Asaf-ud-Daula at Lucknow and then as the commander of a cavalry unit of 300 men in the army of Nawab Nizam Ali Khan at Hyderabad, he joined the service of the Maharaja of Alwar. He died in the battle-field during operations against a petty Jagirdar who had raised the standard of rebellion against the ruler. The ruler of Alwar, Bakhtawar Singh, sanctioned some maintenance allowance for Abdullah Beg's children in recognition of the services rendered by him to the State. According to Maulana Hali, a disciple and biographer of Ghalib, the allowance was paid to Abdullah Beg's family for several years after his death in 1802.

Ghalib was barely five when his father died. He was brought up by his uncle, Nasrullah Beg Khan, the subedar of Agra in the service of the Marathas. After the British defeated the Marathas, Nasrullah Beg Khan was appointed a commander of a cavalry unit of 400 by Lord Lake. Unfortunately, Nasrullah Khan also died in 1806 when Ghalib was only nine, and the child became the legal ward of Nawab Ahmed Baksh, who was a great friend of Lord Lake.

Notwithstanding legal control over him of Nasrullah Beg Khan and later of Nawab Ahmed Baksh, Ghalib spent most of his childhood and early youth with his mother at her father's home. She took care to arrange proper instruction for Ghalib in the traditional field of learning. He acquired a fairly good knowledge of philosophy, Arabic, astronomy, hygiene and physiology, which at that time formed the essential curriculum of the system of education.

Ghalib exhibited his fascination for poetry at a very early age. He was hardly thirteen when he was married in Delhi to eleven year old Umrao Begum, daughter of Mirza Elahi

Baksh Maroof. Ghalib's father-in-law was himself a distinguished poet and used to take Ghalib along to the *mushairas* held in the Red Fort. This gave Ghalib an opportunity to study and appreciate the works of the poetical luminaries of that time and to match his own skill and accomplishments against theirs. This naturally helped Ghalib sharpen his intellect and improve his style. Ghalib's marriage was also responsible for his shifting to Delhi. There is difference of opinion among his biographers about the date from which Ghalib made Delhi his permanent abode. According to a letter from Ghalib to Nawab Alauddin Khan, which bears the date of February 16, 1862, Ghalib puts the period of his stay in Delhi at 51 years. This shows that Ghalib must have migrated to Delhi in 1811, at the age of fourteen.

Delhi stood at the cross-roads of history when Ghalib made it his home. No doubt, a Moghul emperor ruled here, but he was no more than a figure-head. Ghalib had found Delhi pulsating with new intellectual and social activities. However, the most powerful influence on Ghalib was perhaps exercised by his father-in-law, who, as mentioned earlier, was one of the good poets of his time. Ghalib, it is said, had composed nearly 4,000 lines by the time he was twentyfive. Many of these he later discarded at the advice of his friends who thought that these compositions were obscure and stiff.

Ghalib began composing Urdu verse at the age of eight or nine and Persian verse a couple of years later. Ghalib prided himself on his Persian verse, but it was Urdu verse which ultimately won him a unique place of honour in the history of Indian literature. Ghalib had an originality of approach and was usually his own teacher, guide and critic.

After the early years, Ghalib turned towards the problems of life and began to couch deep thought in simple language instead of clothing simple ideas in difficult language as he had

been doing before. He constantly revised and improved his own work. The universality of his verse immortalises him and lends appeal to his poetry for people from all walks of life. He looked at life from so many angles that his works offer solace, enthusiasm and delight to the readers according to their individual situations. Romance practical wisdom, and the message of hope can all be found in his verses.

It would be quite appropriate here to mention specially that he could never reconcile himself to the enslavement of his homeland. He enthusiastically greeted the uprising of 1857, and expressed through verse his sorrow and indignation at the brutal repression by the British. He said: "The Britishers have turned even our homes into jails."

Ghalib also emphasised the need for religious tolerance and said in one of his poems :

"What is faith if not constant devotion,

Let the pious Brahmins too be buried in Kanba."

There were periods in Ghalib's life when he had to face extreme financial stringency. But he always weathered the storm manfully, with his chin up. In 1842, Mr. James Tomson, then Secretary to the Government of India, called Ghalib for appointment as a teacher of Persian in the Delhi College. Ghalib went to see Mr. Tomson, but the latter refused to come out of his office to receive him on the ground that Ghalib had gone there to seek a job, and not as a noble. Ghalib went back without seeing Mr. Tomson with the remark, "I seek a Government job to add to my dynastic honour and glory and not to lose them."

Ghalib's personality and character are vividly reflected in his poetry, and in letters written by him to different personages of his time. His collection of letters *Aud Hindi* and *Urdu-e-Moalla* have played a very dominant role in the development of Urdu prose.

On February 15, 1869 this giant of the world of literature departed for good. He has left his impress on the pages of literary history in indelible characters. To honour this genius, the Government of India have rightly taken a decision to acquire the site of the house where Ghalib lived in Delhi, and turn it into a national monument.

ZORAWAR SINGH

NINETEENTH-CENTURY India produced a remarkable man in Maharaja Gulab Singh, the founder of Jammu and Kashmir State. He not only carved out a new State, but also added a large area to his territory. The latter achievement was mainly due to his great general, Zorawar Singh.

In the lengthy annals of India, Zorawar Singh and Lalitaditya stand out without parallel for their successful military campaigns across and beyond the high Himalayas. Zorawar Singh had a remarkable combination of high military skill, political sagacity and administrative ability.

Zorawar Singh was a native of Bilaspur in Himachal Pradesh and began his career as a private trooper of the small state of Reasi in Jammu. Soon, his personal valour, keen intelligence and extraordinary ability was noticed by the local commandant and the Dogra Chief. Zorawar became the latter's favourite in no time.

Zorawar Singh was a born organizer and commander. Even as an ordinary soldier at Reasi, this future organizer of conquering expeditions into the difficult north had made a careful study of Gulab Singh's Commissariat and found it loose in organization and wasteful in expenditure. At the first opportunity, he suggested to Gulab Singh a scheme whereby a considerable saving could be effected. The Dogra Chief was favourably impressed and asked young Zorawar to implement the scheme. In doing this, he was so successful that he was soon elevated to the post of Commandant at Kishtwar.

It was in Reasi that Zorawar first gave proof of that exemplary courage and endurance in the face of grave danger

that was later to distinguish him in more ambitious campaigns. This was in 1815 A.D. when he was besieged in the local fort by Gulab Singh's opponents. Even though hard pressed, he held out with great courage and fortitude till relief came from Jammu. Thus was Reasi saved for his master.

It was, however, in his daring exploits in Ladakh and Baltisem that Zorawar's capacity for outstanding military leadership and his mastery of strategy—military and political found their fullest expression.

Those families with these high mountainous territories will readily concede the formidable difficulties involved in a military expedition against them at any time. Such an expedition, over a century and a quarter ago, when even road communications did not exist, would seem well nigh impossible. But this intrepid General attempted it at the behest of his master.

Ladakh was then ruled by an indolent prince, Tsepal Namgyal, who cared little for his administration and even less for the welfare of his people. It was summer and the passes were open, while the weather was congenial for the Dogra soldiers from the plains. The peaceful Ladakhis did not have any inkling that a superior military force, efficiently organized and properly equipped, would pounce upon them at this time of the year from an altogether unexpected quarter. They were, therefore, taken completely by surprise when Zorawar Singh's troops crossed into Ladakh or rather its Purig province (now part of Kargil Tehsil) over a 14,000 foot high pass. They could offer little opposition at first, but soon a hastily collected force of about 5,000 men tried to stem the Dogra advance at Sankho. It was in vain and the victorious Dogra army took Kartse, capital of Purig, marched down the Suru river and inflicted another defeat on the Ladakhis at Pashkyum.

Though Gulab Singh had secured the approval of the Sikh ruler of Kashmir and Jammu for his conquest of Ladakh, other nobles at the Lahore Court did not like his growing power. Through the Sikh Governor of Kashmir, they incited the Ladakhis to rise in revolt. But all their attempts were promptly put down by the redoubtable Zorawar. To keep the Ladakhis from further mischief, Zorawar Singh decided to utilize them for the conquest of Baltistan. This was in 1840 A.D., six years after his invasion of Ladakh.

As in Ladakh, in Baltistan also, Zorawar's advance was perfectly timed. Relations between its ruler, Ahmad Shah and his eldest son, Mohammad Shah, were far from cordial. In fact it was ostensibly in response to the disinherited son's request that he launched upon this campaign. Zorawar was again successful in his campaign. Before returning from Skardu, he installed Mohammad Shah as the ruler of Baltistan and left a Dogra garrison in the fort to enforce his authority.

Zorawar Singh was, on the whole, a humane conqueror. He ensured that his troops did not destroy or damage the standing crops. Nor were they permitted to indulge in looting and pillaging the common people. Nor did he tolerate any mistreatment of women.

He raised a force of about 6,000—comprising mostly Ladakhis and Baltis—and, early in 1841, sent an ultimatum to the Tibetan Governor at Gartok to submit on the ground that his province, Rujok, had once been a dependency of Ladakh. The latter tried to put him off by sending presents. But these could hardly mollify the Dogra General who was bent upon bringing the territory under his master's control. Accordingly, he advanced up to the Indus and overran the territory as far as the holy Kailas mountain and Lake Manasarowar. He met with little opposition in this conquest.

While Zorawar camped at Tirthapuri, his trusted lieutenant, Basti Ram, was sent to Taklikhar near the Nepal border.

Zorawar Singh had apparently expected no serious opposition from the Tibetans during winter. This proved to be a very costly mistake. Early in November, he got reports that a 10,000 strong enemy force was advancing towards his positions. He sent two small detachments, one after the other, to probe the enemy's strength, but they were almost completely wiped out.

Zorawar Singh now realized the gravity of the situation. He was not only opposed and surrounded by people well-covered with sheep skins but had also to contend with the paralysing cold of the Tibetan winter. Retreat through the snows was impossible and surrender unthinkable. He decided to meet the enemy boldly and, instead of waiting for them to strike, he advanced and attacked.

The two armies met on the 10th of December and the fighting continued till the 12th. On that fateful day, Zorawar personally led his troops in a final assault. He fought like a lion and might have defeated the enemy, when a bullet hit him in the right shoulder. He fell down from his horse and before he could rise to his feet the Tibetans had closed in upon him. A Tibetan soldier impaled a spear through his breast. The brave General fell on the battle-field, sword in hand.

Zorawar had lost his last battle not so much to the Tibetans as to the rigours of the Tibetan winter. As Cunningham points out: "The Indian soldiers of Zorawar Singh fought under very great disadvantages. The battle-field was upwards of 15,000 feet above the sea level and the time mid-winter, when even during the day, the temperature never rises above the freezing point and the intense cold of night can only be borne by people well-covered with sheep skins and surrounded by fires." "Many of Zorawar's troops", he adds,

“had lost the use of their fingers and toes” and “on the last fatal day not one-half of the men could handle arms.”

In a sense, Zorawar was victorious in his defeat also. His heroic fight against tremendous odds won him the admiration and esteem of his opponents to such an extent that they kept pieces of his flesh in their houses, the idea apparently being that mere possession of the flesh of so gallant a soldier would confer a brave heart on the possessors. The Tibetans also erected a big churtan over his bones at Toyo—an honour they usually reserved only for their high priests. Pieces of his mortal remains were placed inside certain monasteries also. This was a unique instance of a military commander who was so honoured by the very people whom he wanted to subjugate. In the words of Sardar K. M. Panikkar, he was indeed “a soldier of whose achievements India could justly be proud.”

SAYYID AHMED KHAN

ALIGARH is a small district town in Uttar Pradesh, but its fame has spread far and wide because of its magnificent university. One of the biggest in India, the Aligarh Muslim University is a living monument to the vision and dedication of a noble son of India—Sayyid Ahmed Khan. In the galaxy of men in India who accelerated the transition from the medieval to the modern way of life, he occupies a very important place.

Sayyid Ahmed was born in 1817 at Delhi in a very old and distinguished family, which traced its origin to Imam Husain, grandson of the Prophet. Originally belonging to Herat, its members served the Mughal Court and received high distinctions and titles. His father, Sayyid Mutaqqi, was one of the most prominent dignitaries of Akbar Shah, the reigning Mughal emperor. Sayyid Ahmed thus had access to the Mughal Court from his childhood. His maternal grandfather Khwaja Fariduddin Ahmed, Finance Minister of the Emperor, was a man of exceptional abilities and was well-versed in many sciences of the day. He exerted a great influence on Sayyid Ahmed and was instrumental in moulding his character. Another powerful factor in shaping his personality was his mother, Aziz-un-Nisa Begum who was a very capable and pious lady.

Sayyid Ahmed spent his early youth in the aristocratic surroundings of his maternal grandfather's house. He was a robust child and was taught all the aristocratic skills of his day, such as swimming and shooting. He received his formal education in Persian and Arabic and also learnt Mathematics and medicine. He was a gay young man, fond of merry-making

and the good things of life. His life, however, had a complete change after the death of his elder brother in 1845. His father had died earlier in 1838.

At this time, the great Mughal dynasty of Delhi was near extinction and wielded little prestige and authority, though the formal rituals, were still observed. The Emperor was in a great financial crisis and was finding it difficult to support his retinue. Following the death of his father Sayyid Ahmed was advised to serve the Emperor like his ancestors, but the realist in him saw the futility of this sentimental approach. He decided to seek employment with the British, then represented by the East India Company. He joined their service as an apprentice under the Sadr Am'in of De'hi and was later, in 1839, appointed Naib Munshi in the office of the Commissioner at Agra. He worked diligently and was, in 1841, appointed to work as Munsif at Mainpuri. Shortly afterwards, he was transferred to Fatehpur Sikri, where he stayed for four years. At his own request he was later posted at Delhi. In 1853, he got an elevation to the post of Sadr Amin of Bijnor. In 1858, he was transferred to Moradabad as Sadr-us-Sudur, then to Ghazipur and finally, in 1864, to Aligarh. In 1867, Sayyid Ahmed was appointed a judge of the Court of Small Causes and was posted at Varanasi. He remained in Government service till 1876 and then sought retirement.

The long years of service in the Government, however, were interspersed with intense literary and social activity. He wrote most of his books in this period and the basis for his social and educational work was laid during this time.

The turning point in his career was the Revolt of 1857 and the events that followed it. This land-mark in Indian history finally saw the end of one era and the beginning of another. The Mughal dynasty, which had ruled India for centuries, came to an end and the British power became firmly established.

Along with this change, the fortunes of the old nobility and aristocracy also changed. A great many of them were massacred and most others met financial ruin. The cultural and economic life of the nation was badly shaken and many old values were shattered. This was a time when old society was in the process of utter decay, but the new pattern had yet to emerge. These conditions brought about a great transformation in the life of Sayyid Ahmed.

As a result of the political and other changes, it was the Muslim community which had suffered most. This community had been, for a long time, in the grip of decadence and the British rulers made the Muslims a special target of their vengeance. Among the Hindus, there had emerged even earlier many social reformers and educationists and they were already undergoing a kind of renaissance. The Muslims, on the other hand, were getting more and more backward. It was this realisation that prompted Sayyid Ahmed to devote his time and energy for their uplift. He considered Hindus and Muslims as the "two eyes of a beautiful maiden" and equally important for the country. He had come to the conclusion that, for their uplift, education and a scientific attitude of mind was necessary. With this end in view, Sayyid Ahmed established a Scientific Society at Ghazipur. The Duke of Argyll, then Secretary of State for India, accepted the Society's patronship and the Lt. Governor of the Punjab and North Western Province (afterwards known as U.P.) became its Vice-Patron. Sayyid Ahmed was the Secretary of this Society, which did a lot of work to bring the knowledge and literature of the West to India. The Society was later shifted to Aligarh when Sayyid Ahmed was posted there.

In 1864, Sayyid Ahmed established a school at Ghazipur. Its foundation-stone was laid by two eminent men of the time, a Hindu and a Muslim—a fact which shows how deeply

anxious he was to ensure unity among the two sister-communities. Earlier, he had established a Madrassah at Moradabad in 1859.

The Muslim Anglo-Oriental College, which in the course of time developed into the Aligarh Muslim University, was established in 1875. He worked day and night for the establishment of this institution. He went to the extent of wearing a beggar's *jholi* to collect money for the college. He came up against stiff opposition to his scheme from some orthodox quarters, which were opposed to the idea of modern education among Muslims. He successfully resisted this opposition and ultimately succeeded in establishing the college. Having secured retirement from Government service, he devoted all his time, energy and resources to the work of consolidating the college.

In 1886, Sayyid Ahmed organised the Mohammedan Educational Conference. He realised that a single college could not suffice for the educational needs of the entire Muslim population of India. This movement led to the establishment of a large number of educational institutions throughout the country.

The Government of the day recognised the importance of the work and he was appointed a member of the Education Commission. In 1878, he was nominated a member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council and, in 1887, a member of the Civil Service Commission. In recognition of his services, he was awarded the titles of CSI and KCSI, a great honour during the British days. The degree of L.L.D., *honoris causa*, was conferred on him by the Edinburgh University. He was also elected an Honorary Member of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain.

Though Sayyid Ahmed was in the employment of the British and worked in close collaboration with them, yet he remained, at heart a patriot. There are a number of

anecdotes from his life showing how he always kept his self-respect and dignity as an Indian. He co-operated with the British because he honestly felt that, in the existing circumstances, it was the only right course for Indians to follow.

Sayyid Ahmed was also a great religious and political thinker of his day. He wrote profusely to bring about religious reform in his community. He felt that any religion must serve the needs of the society according to the times. He wrote a commentary on the *Quran* and, through his speeches and writings, laid the foundation of a new and progressive trend in Islam.

European missionaries were active in India after 1857, particularly in the days of the famine which followed a few years later. They made verbal attacks on Islam which were intended to wean the young Muslims away from their religion. Sir William Muir wrote the *Life of Mohomet*, in four volumes, which gave a highly biased and distorted account. Sayyid Ahmed felt that it was his moral duty to write a rejoinder. For this purpose, he made a special study and visited England in 1869 to consult historical documents. He spent more than a year doing research there. The outcome of his labour was a book which systematically demolished Muir's theories.

In spite of his fervent devotion to Islam, Sayyid Ahmed was quite secular in his thinking. His friends included a large number of Hindus and the institutions founded by him were open to both the communities. There were a number of Hindus on the teaching staff of M.A.O College and many Hindus worked and donated money for his educational enterprises.

Sayyid Ahmed was a great literary figure of his time, and he had a very convincing and forceful style of writing. His personality and ideas made a great impact on the people of his time, as well as on the generations that followed. His

ideals found an echo in many hearts and a whole new crop among the Muslim intelligentsia came forward to work under his guidance and inspiration.

Syyid Ahmed d'ed on March 27, 1898, at the ripe old age of 81. He was born amidst decadence and obscurantism, but ushered in an era of renaissance and enlightenment.

DADABHAI NAOROJI

THE GRAND OLD MAN of India, Dadabhai Naoroji, was born on September 4, 1825, in Bombay. His ancestors came from Navsari (Gujarat) and were engaged in agriculture. His father, Naoroji Palanji Dordi, who had migrated from Navsari to Bombay, was a poor Parsi priest or Mobed. His mother was Manekbai. Dadabhai was their first and only child. Simple and frugal, the family lived happily in a small house.

! Misfortune befell the family when Dadabhai lost his father when he was only four years old. The entire responsibility of bringing him up fell on his mother. She rose to the occasion and kept her balance and her courage. Though she was not educated, she had a remarkable natural intelligence. She was quite young at this time, but she did not remarry. She worked hard and sent Dadabhai to school. Her brother was a very kind man and he helped her through the critical time. Endowed with wisdom, the loving mother took care of her beloved son. She took keen interest in his studies and guided him with great care. When Dadabhai grew up, she helped him in his work for female education and other social reforms. Quite rightly, Dadabhai later said, "She made me what I am."

! Dadabhai was sent to a village school. Extraordinarily intelligent, he worked out arithmetical sums most readily. ! His teachers liked him because he was a bright and well-behaved student. He never used abusive language and to those who did, he said, "Your bad words will remain in your mouth." ! One of his teachers advised his mother to send him to the English school run by the Native Education Society. Dadabhai came from a poor family, but his mother could send

him to this school because education was then entirely free. Feeling grateful for this opportunity, Dadabhai, later in life, worked for the extension of free education to everyone, rich or poor.

Dadabhai was very fond of books and he used to read a great deal. He had a wonderful memory and he used to narrate the stories he read to his class-mates and friends in an interesting manner. He became very popular among his fellow-students who regarded him as their leader. He also took part in games.

Dadabhai was the best student in his class but a class-mate, who had the knack of committing everything to memory for the examination used to win all the prizes. After the prizes were distributed, the students would be asked general questions about knowledge outside their text-books. Here, the student who had secured the examination prizes would fail miserably and Dadabhai would score high and win the special prize.

Child marriages were common in those days. Dadabhai was only eleven years old when he was married to Qulbaji.

Having passed the Matriculation examination, Dadabhai joined the Elphinstone College, Bombay. He had a brilliant career here and won many scholarships and prizes. At this stage, he was introduced to the classics in Persian and English. The books which made a lasting impact on his mind included Firdausi's *Shahnama*, the Persian epic and Watt's *Improvement of the Mind*. The latter taught him not to use two words when one was enough. He also learnt from it that one should be clear in one's thoughts. From *The Duties of Zoroastrians*, a Gujarati book which was his favourite, he learnt that one should be pure in thought, speech and action. It was also during his college days that he read the lives of many great men of the world. The new and noble ideas from their lives made him realise that he also owed a debt to society. He

decided to pay back the debt by devoting himself to the service of the people.

His professors regarded Dadabhai as "the promise of India". His brilliant career as a student attracted the attention of a High Court judge who was the head of his college. He suggested that Dadabhai should be sent to England to study law. Dadabhai's family, however, could not find the money for the purpose. The judge, thereupon, offered to bear half the expenses if the other half were contributed by the leading Parsis of the city. The orthodox among the Parsis, however, did not extend help because they feared that Dadabhai might be tempted to become a Christian during his stay in England. Thus, he lost the opportunity of going to England to become a barrister.

On the completion of his college career, Dadabhai was appointed Assistant Master at the Elphinstone School, Bombay. Afterwards, he became an Assistant Professor in his own college. Later, he rose to be the Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy in the same institution. Dadabhai was the first Indian to achieve this distinction. He regarded it as a great event and was proud of it all his life. He loved to be known as Professor Naoroji. As a Professor, he endeared himself to his pupils by his simple and charming manners, his masterly teaching and kindness to students.

Dadabhai did not, however, confine himself to teaching. From his early days, he had felt the need for reforms in society. He organised schools to impart education to women who were in those days backward as a class. He started organisations under whose auspices young people met and discussed various literary, scientific and social subjects. He started a Gujarati weekly named *Rast Goftar* (Truth Teller). His object was to spread knowledge and to make the life of the people generally

better. He was indeed a pioneer of social reform in the city of Bombay.

In 1855, Dadabhai went to England to work as a partner in the commercial firm of Cama and Co. This was the first Indian firm to be founded in London. The Professor turned to business in England because he thought it would provide an opportunity for him to come into contact with the British public and would help promote understanding and friendship between England and India.

Dadabhai wanted to run the business honestly. He placed principles of commercial morality above business interests. His other partners did not share his ideas and there were sharp differences of opinion with them. The firm dealt in commodities which included opium, wines and spirits. Dadabhai believed that these articles ruined the lives of thousands of people. He, therefore, decided not to accept his share in the profits which were derived from the trade in these articles. When he found that it was not possible for him to carry on business with honesty and integrity, he left the firm and started his own business. As he was now independent, he could pursue trade according to his own principles. He was able to do very well in his new business. Meanwhile, one of his friends incurred heavy losses in business and became almost bankrupt. With his natural kindness, Dadabhai tried to help him, and, in the process, lost everything he had. But the people to whom he owed business debts were so much impressed by his integrity that they did not trouble him. On the other hand, they gave him fresh loans to help him resume his business. In this crisis, he remained cool and collected and did not lose his courage or patience.

In England, besides his business, he worked as Professor of Gujarati in the University College, London. He utilised his presence in England to help the people of India by voicing

their grievances. He advised and guided the Indian students who went there to compete for the Indian Civil Service and other Services. When Gandhiji went to England to qualify as a barrister, he carried with him a letter of introduction to Dadabhai. Gandhiji once said that Dadabhai was like a father to Indian students. The students also held Dadabhai in great regard and affection.

He started an organisation called the London Indian Society to bring Englishmen and Indians together to discuss problems concerning the welfare of India. Dadabhai felt that the British people believed in equality, justice and fair-play and would, therefore, help India to become free. Dadabhai was the president of this Society and it carried on useful national propaganda for over five decades.

To promote understanding and friendship between England and India, Dadabhai founded another organisation called the East India Association. Both Indians and Englishmen were its members. The Association organised meetings at which members read papers on important subjects concerning India. Through these meetings, Dadabhai tried to educate the British public on the various problems connected with India. Dadabhai demanded that Indians should be associated in a large measure with the governance of India. It was a result of his efforts that the Indians were later given fair opportunities to compete in the Civil Service Examinations. Dadabhai told the first meeting itself that the wealth of India was being drained away to England and that the Indians were not being associated with the administration of their own country. He thus made efforts to awaken the interest of the British public in Indian affairs and thereby promote to the welfare of the Indian people.

When he returned to India in 1869, he toured the country and delivered lectures about the objects and work of the

Association. The patriotic sentiments of the people were stirred by his fervent speeches. Dadabhai was given a very warm welcome by the citizens of Bombay for the eminent services he had rendered to India.

He again went to England to resume his work for India. He had made a deep study of the economic conditions in India and told the British people how extremely poor the Indians were and that the reason for their poverty was British rule.

The Indian National Congress was established in 1885. Dadabhai was one of its leading founder-members and took an active part in its activities. He was elected President of the second session of the Congress, held at Calcutta in 1886.

His next visit to England came in 1886. It was his earnest desire to become a member of the British Parliament, because he wanted to sit there as the true representative of the people of India and be able to ventilate their grievances and secure a fair hearing and justice for his countrymen. At first, he did not succeed in being elected. But he was a determined and tenacious man. For five years he tried and, ultimately, he won from Central Finsbury in 1892—the first Indian to be elected to the British Parliament. As a member, he told the representatives of the British people how pitiable India's condition was under British rule. He demanded an enquiry into the affairs of India and successfully urged Parliament to appoint a Royal Commission to report on how the British Government spent money in India. Dadabhai was later appointed a member of this Commission. He was the first Indian to sit on a Royal Commission. It was as a result of his efforts that the Indian Civil Service examination began to be held simultaneously in India and England. Dadabhai's election as an M.P. was the occasion for great national rejoicing in India.

He was invited to preside over the Lahore session of the Congress in 1893. He accepted the invitation and returned to India where he received a rousing welcome. Dadabhai was asked to be the President of the Congress for the third time at its Calcutta session in 1906. In his presidential address, he put forward the demand for self-government or *swaraj*. He asked the people to remain united and work hard to achieve it. It was Dadabhai who, for the first time, claimed self-government for India.

Now an old man, Indians referred to him with reverence and affection as the 'Grand Old Man of India'.

The great patriot and illustrious leader served India for over seven decades. He thought of nothing but India's welfare till his last breath. On June 30, 1917, he passed away at Bombay at the age of ninetyone. Generations of Indians will cherish his memory with gratitude and affection and draw inspiration from him to work, live and die for their motherland. He will remain for ever one of the brightest stars in the galaxy of Indian patriots.

BAL GANGADHAR TILAK

BAL GANGADHAR TILAK was born on July 23, 1855 at Ratnagiri on the west coast of India. His father was a school master who rose to become an Inspector of Schools. Tilak imbibed the love of Sanskrit and Mathematics from his father.

His father's transfer to Poona, when Tilak was only ten, was good for him as it facilitated his schooling under some of the best teachers. Unluckily for Tilak, his father passed away when he was only sixteen years of age. A few months earlier Tilak had been married to a girl from a neighbouring village.

In the year 1877, Tilak took his B.A. degree with first class in Mathematics. Two years later, he completed his study of law. Tilak's first love was education. Even while he was a student, he joined a few friends in making a plan for a radical change in the system of education introduced by the British. The aim was to base education on Indian tradition and to make it available to a larger number of people. The young men were no dreamers. They were quite serious about their project. When they left college, they took a vow of sacrifice and dedication to the cause of education. Recalling those days later, Tilak wrote : "We were men with our brains in a fever with the thoughts of the degraded condition of our country and, after long cogitation, we had formed the opinion that the salvation of our motherland was to be found in education alone."

With the efforts of Tilak and his friends, a society was founded in 1880. Its purpose was to set up a chain of private

schools on the model of Christian missionary institutions. This society gradually grew up into a major instrument for the spread of education in Maharashtra and adjoining areas. For the next ten years, Tilak was busy with the work of the society. He had also taken up the teaching of Mathematics at a college run by the society at Poona.

Tilak's restless mind found the field of education too narrow for its full expression. He had developed a serious concern for the social and political problems of his day. He also wielded a powerful pen. It was inevitable, therefore, for him to venture into journalism. He decided to devote his time, more and more, to editing the *Kesari*, a Marathi journal, which he and some of his friends had started earlier. The *Kesari* soon came to be completely identified with Tilak. Through its pages, Tilak carried on a relentless crusade for the emancipation of the masses. This emancipation, in Tilak's view, had to be both from internal weaknesses and the "sense of inferiority" from which Indian society suffered and from the stranglehold of the British rule. Tilak was passionately devoted to strengthening and reforming the Indian society. For him, this was not merely the same thing as social reform. He was critical of those reformers who, in their zeal, cut at the very roots of the traditional social structure. Tilak, however, was not conservative in his ideas. On the problem of untouchability among Hindus, he declared: "I would not recognise even God if He said that untouchability was ordained by Him."

Tilak's impatient mind soon led him from problems of social reform to the central problem of his day, namely, the liberation of India from British rule. He began writing articles in the *Kesari*, asserting every Indian's birth right to be free. This was a revolutionary doctrine to be preached in those days.

and it quickly brought Tilak into conflict with the Government. *Kesari* was widely read in Maharashtra and, as its editor Tilak was well known and respected in that region. It was his conviction on the charge of sedition in 1897 which brought him up from provincial to national leadership. This transition had actually begun eight years earlier. In 1889, Tilak attended the Bombay session of the Indian National Congress. Two other young men, who were later to emerge as national leaders, also appeared on the Congress platform for the first time the same year. They were Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Lala Lajpat Rai. From 1899 onward, Tilak attended almost every session of the Congress.

In those days, membership of the Congress was confined mainly to a section of the educated class. Its activity consisted chiefly of meeting once a year and passing resolutions. To young impassioned patriots like Tilak, this seemed a poor way of conducting a nationalist movement. The Congress, he felt, would remain ineffectual so long as it did not develop into an organisation of the masses. As early as 1896, Tilak wrote, "There is no greater folly than the assumption of the educated classes that they are separate from the people. They must realise that they are part and parcel of the whole—the Indian masses. Their own salvation depends on the salvation of the people." Tilak was a man of the masses. He was the first to arouse and mobilise public opinion for national ends. For this, he had to undergo numerous hardships and sacrifices.

In 1896, the Poona region was affected by a serious famine. Tilak plunged whole-heartedly into relief work. He had soon to devote his attention also to the havoc wrought in Poona by the outbreak of plague in 1897. On June 22, 1897, two British officers were found murdered in Poona. They were suspected

of committing atrocities in the course of the epidemic relief work. Tilak was arrested in Bombay on July 27, although there was apparently nothing to connect him with the incident. He was prosecuted on the charge of sedition. The case was based on a poem and an article on Shivaji which he had published in the *Kesari*. Political agitation was in its infancy in 1897 and prosecution for sedition was virtually unknown. Tilak was, however, convicted and sentenced to 18 months' rigorous imprisonment. Tilak's conviction made him a national figure overnight. It did something by removing the terror of the word 'sedition' from the people's mind. It ended their meek subservience to foreign domination and helped create a new spirit of nationalism.

While in prison, Tilak resumed his interest in the Hindu classics. He took up the study of his favourite subject—the antiquity of the *Vedas* and the Aryan civilisation—which formed the basis of his book *Arctic Home in the Vedas*, published five years later.

At the time when Tilak came out of prison the nationalist movement in India was, as it were, standing at the cross-roads. A great debate was raging in the ranks of the Congress. One group of its leaders believed that freedom could come gradually and through a measure of co-operation with the British. The other group had very little faith in the promises of the British rulers and in the effectiveness of constitutional means. Tilak, by temperament as well as conviction, belonged to the latter group. Among the prominent leaders of the freedom struggle in those days, Lala Lajpat Rai was on the side of Tilak, while Gopal Krishna Gokhale represented the opposite side. The partition of Bengal in 1905 brought these differences to the fore. Tilak and people of his way of thinking felt frustrated by the tactics of the foreign rulers. They wanted to transform

the Congress into a militant organisation. "Political rights," he argued, "will have to be fought for. Some people think that these can be won by persuasion. We think that they can be got only by strong pressure."

From then onwards, in the pages of the *Kesari* and at successive sessions of the Congress, Tilak began to expound his philosophy of passive resistance. Boycott of British goods and support for *swadeshi* products were the two main articles of this new philosophy.

Tilak whole-heartedly welcomed the patriotic upsurge in Bengal and set out to mobilise the nation for an all-India movement. He called the partition of Bengal a blessing in disguise, for it helped to create a new consciousness of national solidarity. Bengal's cause soon became India's cause and the movement was amplified into a four-fold programme of boycott, *swadeshi*, national education and *swaraj*. In a leading article in the *Kesari* (August 15, 1905) under the heading "The Crisis Arrives", Tilak wrote :

It appears that many people have not yet grasped the full significance of the boycott movement. Such measures are absolutely necessary, especially when there is a struggle going on between a people and their alien rulers. The history of England itself contains a noteworthy instance of how an angry people proceeded to chastise their king for having refused their demands. We have neither the power nor the inclination to take up arms against the Government. But should we not try to stop the drain of millions of rupces from the country ? Do we not see how the Chinese boycott of American goods has opened the eyes of the United States Government ? History abundantly proves that a subject people, however helpless, can by means of

unity, courage and determination overcome their haughty rulers without resort to arms.

In advocating a programme of passive resistance and *swadeshi*, Tilak had anticipated, almost item by item, the non-cooperation movement which Gandhiji launched fourteen years later. Lokmanya Tilak seemed to be speaking in the very accent of Mahatma Gandhi, in his uncompromising stand that India would be satisfied with nothing short of *poorna swaraj*.

Tilak's own capacity for sacrifice and self-denial was immense. He was a tireless worker and campaigner and a prodigious writer. He thrived on controversies. A great part of his political life was spent in espousing causes that were unpopular at that time. He had very little concern for his personal safety, comfort and even for his grief. In January 1903, during the epidemic of Poona, Tilak's eldest son, Vishwanath, died of plague. His typical response to condolences was : "When there is a general bonfire of the whole town, everyone must contribute his quota of fuel." Next morning, while he was dictating the leading article of the *Kesari*, he was informed that his younger son was running fever. Any other person in his place would have been completely unnerved, but Tilak remained absorbed in his work until he had revised the manuscript and sent it to the press.

Tilak's last and most serious confrontation with the British Government came in 1908. Those were tumultuous days. The partition of Bengal had given rise to a wave of terrorism. There were bomb incidents in many parts of the country and the Government let loose a terrible wave of repression. Tilak was not happy at the incidence of terrorism, but his sympathies were entirely with those who had to resort to these extreme

measures as a reaction to the policy of repression pursued by the rulers. He wrote a series of articles in the *Kesari*, giving expression to his sorrow and indignation. These articles were deliberately mis-constructed by the authorities as an incitement to violence.

On June 24, 1908 a warrant of arrest was served on Tilak in Bombay. The historic trial of Tilak on charges of sedition began on July 13. Tilak defended his own case. He saw himself not merely as an individual seeking acquittal, but as a nation's representative championing the cause of freedom. "Today I am in the dock," Tilak told his prosecutors, "for opinions which I have formulated. It is not sedition to find fault with the Government or to advocate the reform of administration. It is one's inherent right to fight for the liberty of his people, for a change in the Government."

But the British rulers were moved not by consideration of justice but by vindictiveness. Here was an opportunity of wreaking their revenge on an Indian who was described by the then Governor of Bombay as "one of the chief conspirators, perhaps the chief conspirator against the existence of the British Government in India."* Tilak was convicted and deported to Mandalay in Burma where he was to spend the next six years of his life. On hearing the verdict, Tilak defiantly said :

All I wish to say is that, in spite of the verdict of the jury, I maintain that I am innocent. There are higher powers that rule the destiny of things and it may be the will of Providence that the cause which I represent may prosper more by my suffering than by my remaining free.

At Mandalay, Tilak soon settled himself into a routine of writing and thinking. The man of action absorbed himself in

reading, in learning new things and in contemplating on the true message of the Gita. A most fruitful result of this constant reading and reflection was the *Gita Rahasya*. In this, Tilak tried to show how the philosophy of the *Gita* helps to solve the moral issues involved in every-day life.

On June 8, 1914, Tilak was informed that his exile was over. He was now 58, and his health was broken, but his spirit was unbowed. On his return to India, he resumed his political activities with his usual zeal and thoroughness.

Those were the days of the First World War. Gandhiji had arrived on the Indian scene, but he had yet to make a mark. There was no other leader of Tilak's stature and following. The various factions of the nationalist movement quickly united under his leadership. Tilak's health, however, had started failing. The winter of 1918 and practically the whole of 1919, Tilak spent abroad, mostly in England. The ostensible purpose of his visit was a libel case in which he was involved, but he had really gone there to win support for the cause of India's independence.

By the time Tilak returned from his stay in England, he was convinced that the British were actually serious about some major constitutional reform. He was prepared to give a fair trial to the Montagu-Chelmsford formula. At the famous Amritsar session of the Congress, he carried the day for his policy of "responsive co-operation" with these reforms. His motto was "to accept whatever is given, but to continue to agitate for more."

But certain aspects of the post-war policies of the British Government destroyed India's faith in British intentions. The Indian Muslims were agitated on the issue of *khilafat*, and Gandhiji was giving the call for fresh battles in the

struggle for freedom. Tilak and other leaders of his generation had prepared the nation for the trials and triumphs of the Gandhian era. On August 1, 1920, a day before Gandhiji launched his first non-cooperation movement, Tilak breathed his last. Thus ended an era in political history of India's freedom struggle.

JAGDISH CHANDRA BOSE

ABOUT seventy years ago a great Indian scientist astonished the world by a number of startling discoveries. By one of these, he paved the way for modern wireless telegraphy and radio broadcasting. By another, he proved that plants too are living organisms. His discoveries were so amazing and so much in advance of the times that they seemed more like fairy-tales than the results of scientific enquiry.

This great Indian who proved beyond dispute that plants have consciousness and feelings was Jagdish Chandra Bose. The great scientists of the world were so impressed by his epoch-making discoveries that they conferred on him the highest scientific honours of their countries. In one of Bose's lectures in England, the great physicist and mathematician, Einstein, himself was in the audience. He was so thrilled and excited that he proposed that Bose should be honoured by erecting his statue in the headquarters of the League of Nations at Geneva.

Let us now see why Einstein was so impressed and the scientists of the world showered on him the highest honour. Jagdish Chandra Bose had proved by actual experiments that plants have emotions and that everything created lives and dies. In explaining his discovery, Jagdish Chandra Bose said :

 Hitherto, we have regarded trees and plants as not akin to us, because they are the voiceless of the world. But I will show you that they are sensible creatures—in that they really exist and can answer your questions.

Jagdish Chandra Bose was born on November 30, 1858 at

Vikrampur in East Bengal. His father, Bhagwan Chandra Bose, was a Sub-Divisional Officer. Even as a boy, Jagdish Chandra showed a keen inclination towards invention and a strong love of nature. His father noticed his aptitudes and carefully nursed them by providing all facilities to his promising son. He also sent him later to England for higher studies in science.

Bose passed the B.A. Examination in 1874 from the Cambridge University in England, winning a scholarship in Natural Science. Next year he took his B.Sc. degree from the London University. After completing a brilliant educational career in London, Bose returned to Calcutta. At this time, he showed definite signs of his many-sided genius. When he was 25, Bose was introduced to Lord Ripon, the Viceroy of India, by prof. Fawcett who was a famous economist. Shortly afterwards, Jagdish Chandra was appointed Professor of Physics in the Presidency College, Calcutta.

Bose had always been an ardent student of science. To work hard, without looking for reward, was for him the key to success. But the reward came soon in the shape of a major scientific discovery. With the publication of his theory on the "Determination of Indices of Electrical Refraction" in the journal of the Royal Society of London came the first glory of his scientific career. The learned Society was gratified at the important contribution made by him to the advancement of science. The London University honoured the great Indian scientist by conferring on him the degree of Doctor of Science. Western scientists instantly recognised Dr. Bose's genius. Lord Kelvin was so impressed by Bose's researches on electrical waves that he felt lost in joy. His biographer, Prof. Geddes, records that Lord Kelvin "not only broke into the warmest praise, but limped upstairs into the ladies gallery and shook Mrs. Bose by both hands with glowing congratulations on her husband's brilliant work." This happened when Bose addressed

the Liverpool British Association in 1896. Next year, Bose was given the unique honour of addressing the Royal Society of England where he spoke of the nature of electrical waves. It may be said here that only the greatest scientists who have done original research work are invited to address this Society.

In the year 1900, Dr. Bose went to Europe to represent India at the Paris Congress of Science. In that international gathering, Dr. Bose read his paper on "Response of Inorganic and Living Matter" which won for him universal praise. Swami Vivekananda, who was present at the Congress, felt full of pride at Dr. Bose's achievement, for he had brought honour to his motherland. Bose was now invited to deliver a series of lectures on his wonderful discoveries. In May 1901, Dr. Bose delivered his second lecture before the Royal Society. In this historic discourse he demonstrated clearly and elaborately the identical nature of reactions in plants and animals. Next year, he gave an illustrated address before the great scientists of Vienna. Prof. Molisch of the Imperial University of Vienna solemnly declared that Europe was indebted to India for the original research initiated by Dr. Bose.

Then followed his lecture tour of America. Learned scholars and scientists of New York, Harvard, Columbia and Chicago listened to him with delight and presented him with eloquent addresses.

Back in India, he worked alone for more than 29 years. He invented delicate instruments to demonstrate and prove his theories. When western scientists, marvelling at his complicated machines, asked "Where did you get them made?" Dr. Bose replied with real pride, "In India."

In most of his scientific theories, Dr. Bose was much ahead of his times. He succeeded in sending and receiving wireless signals before Marconi did so in 1907. | Much before him, a

great French scientist was engaged in investigating plant life but without success. It remained for Dr. Bose to make the amazing discovery that *plants have hearts*. He invented the crescograph—a delicate instrument—for measuring the pulse of plants. His achievements did not stop here. Dr. Bose worked on metals and proved that they too react. Inanimate objects like steel and stone are sensitive and subject to tension. He invented the galvanometer to test the fatigue of metals. More wonderful, he showed that, like animals, metals can be “killed” by poison.

In 1915, he was again given the honour of addressing the Royal Society of England. In 1917, he received Knighthood from King George V. This is one of the highest British honours for meritorious service. In the same year, he set up a Research Institute at Calcutta, to which he made a personal contribution of Rs. 5 lakhs. The rest of the money—about Rs. 15 lakhs—came from the Government and admirers from all parts of the world. Known as the Basu Vigyan Mandir, it has in its laboratories delicate instruments made in its own workshops.

Although a great scientist, Dr. Bose lived like a hermit and gave away his large earnings for great causes. In his will, he donated Rs. 15 lakhs for educational, social and humanitarian causes. A lakh of rupees was given for a memorial to Sister Nivedita.

Dr. Bose was a mystic, but to this trait was added the cold precision of the man of science. He was a great patriot and an admirer of the Indian heritage. “If I am to take a hundred more births, each time I would like to be born in Hindustan,” he wrote in a letter to Rabindranath Tagore, his friend. He had a special love for India’s nationalist song *Bande Mataram*. Whenever he heard it sung, he went into a

reverential trance. At the instance of Sister Nivedita, he sent a team of artists to renovate the famous cave-temples of Ajanta and Ellora. It was also in Sister Nivedita's company that he visited the places of pilgrimage in India every summer, including Kedarnath and Badrinath. He passed many days in Swami Vivekananda's *ashram* at Mayavati (Himalayas) where most of his books were written and revised.

In 1925, Bose left for Europe to participate in the League of Nations meeting at Geneva. This was his last European tour. Lecturing before eminent scientists of Europe and England, Bose again demonstrated his sensational discoveries with regard to plant life. On seeing one such demonstration, Mr. Bernard Shaw, the famous British playwright, presented him with a special edition of his works bearing the inscription: "From the Least to the Greatest Biologist." The French savant, Romain Rolland, sent him his *Jean Christophe* with the note "To the Revealer of a New World." The editor of the *Spectator* of London organised a lunch in honour of Sir J. C. Bose who "has given a permanence to the Indian civilisation such as no other nation has approached." In the gathering, the greatest literary figures of the time, like Galsworthy, Rebecca, Norman Angel, Yeats, Brown and others came to offer their homage to the great scientist who had enriched human thought. Shortly afterwards, he delivered two lectures at the Vienna University. This was attended by the most eminent scientists and medical men of Europe. The audience burst forth in admiration and warmly congratulated him on his unique achievement. His conquest of the Vienna scientists was so complete that the Rector of the Vienna University addressed a letter to the Viceroy of India saying that Sir J. C. Bose's researches had opened out a new gate of knowledge of the highest theoretical and practical importance.

After his triumphal tour of Europe, Bose returned to

India in September 1928. This was his 70th year. A great movement was afoot in India to celebrate his 70th birthday and poet Rabindranath Tagore was the pioneering spirit of this celebration. Great intellectuals of India and abroad joined the function which was held at the Basu Vigyan Mandir. The solemn function was inaugurated with that famous song which has now become the National Anthem of India :

Jana-gana-manu-adhinayaka jaya he Bharat-bhagya-vidhata

Rabindranath Tagore presented the great scientist with an address in verse in which he paid glowing tributes and recounted the glories that Jagdish Chandra brought upon himself and the motherland by his wonderful discoveries.

In November 1937, at the age of 79, the great scientist breathed his last. With him disappeared from the Eastern hemisphere the great star that had illumined and led the world of science for so long. Decades have passed since then, but Jagdish Chandra is even today regarded as one of the most original scientists.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

RABINDRANATH TAGORE was born in Calcutta in 1861 at a time when the Indian social system was in a ferment under the influence of the English rulers. The era of imperial glory of the Nawabs and Badshahs was fading away. The impressionable years of his childhood were influenced strongly by these events and he imbibed the lustre of the Indian mediaeval heritage, along with the new vision of modern European culture. Being the son of an ideal Hindu saint, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, he had also drunk deep at the fountain of ancient Indian culture in the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*. The creative intellect of Rabindranath Tagore had thus flourished at the confluence of these three currents of ideas

It is interesting, indeed, to note that Tagore had no methodical schooling in educational institutions when he was a boy. He felt that like a free bird in the vast expanse of the blue sky, a growing mind should also be given the complete freedom to learn, to know, to think absolutely in his or her own way. So, one could learn being one with Nature from the chirping of birds, the gurgling of streams, and the changing colour of the landscape in different seasons. Later, Tagore conducted educational experiments based on this idea in his institution, Viswa Bharati of Santiniketan. For some time, of course, he had his schooling at the Oriental Seminary, Calcutta ; but he used to feel that the walls of the school building stood there, vigilant and unyielding as a policeman. He also spent some time at another English-medium school, St. Xavier's School in Calcutta ; but his temperament did not permit him to continue his studies there. The only pleasure he used to

associate with his schooling days was the remembrance of the affection of one teacher, Father De Pencenda.

At the age of seventeen, Tagore was sent to England for higher studies. He got admission to the University of London, but Irish music and English poetry absorbed him more than the routine syllabus there. He returned home after eighteen months, as a budding young poet of great promise. He not only started composing poems, songs and musical plays, but also began planning new forms of stage-craft and techniques of dance, dramas, etc. He belonged to a very well-to-do family of *zamindars* (landed gentry) of Calcutta. Soon, he was commissioned by his wise father to administer their family estate in the eastern and northern parts of Bengal. The mighty river Padma flows in those regions, spreading the innumerable bounties of Nature. Poet Tagore preferred to live in a house-boat upon the rippling waters of the Padma. He spent fourteen years living in house-boats on the Padma, of course with frequent breaks. That was the most fruitful period for his poetry and music, short stories and other fiction. In his early forties, Tagore decided to establish an academic institution exactly on the pattern of the *ashram* where young boys were educated in the ancient days of the Rigvedic civilization. Thus came into being the Brahmacharya Vidyalyaya at Santiniketan in 1902. At this time, his poetic compositions entered a new phase—that of writing devotional poems and songs. His love of Nature now became transformed into love of God. Some of these were later translated into English and compiled in a short volume which became famous as the *Geetanjali*. It was this book which brought him the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913.

Tagore now came into the lime-light in the field of world literature. He started getting invitations from countries of Europe and America and from China, Japan and other South-

East Asian countries. He visited the United States of America and many countries of Europe several times. In 1930, Tagore was invited to deliver the Hibbert lectures at the Manchester College, Oxford. Here, he communicated a new message to the people of the West as an apostle of the East—the message of love and compassion for all mankind. Tagore's Hibbert lectures were later compiled and published as a book entitled *Religion of Man*.

Rabindranath's versatile genius was yet to flower fully. In his early sixties, he took to painting and started expressing in lines and colours all his visions of men and matters, of nature and the unknown. Soon, he earned wide recognition as a very successful painter and an exhibition of his paintings was organised in Paris. What he could not express in words was now presented by him in line and colour. Tagore's paintings also gave vent to a new form of aesthetic feeling and opened a new chapter in the Indian form of painting.

Visva Bharati, the institution which he had founded had as its basic objective the transmission of the ideas of the East to all parts of the world and to bring in all the noble thoughts and visions of other countries of the world. Expressing the idea in verse, Tagore wrote :

My country is everywhere,
I seek it desperately.
My home is everywhere,
I shall fight to win it.
In every home there dwells.
My closest of kin.
I seek him everywhere.

Tagore had very close contact with Mahatma Gandhi and, on many occasions, the two met on a common platform. It was Tagore who named Gandhiji as "Mahatma" and the latter addressed Tagore as "Gurudev".

On the 7th of August, 1941, at the age of eighty, this great soul departed. Regarding his life and activities, his ideas and visions and the period of eighty years which he had spent in his land of ours, Tagore wrote himself :

“I have come on pilgrimage to the shrine of this earth, a temple where the god-man is the centre of the history of all times, of all countries, of all peoples. I have poured my heart into this dust, this grass, this soil, into shrubs and into forest giants. I am the friend of those who dwell in the lap of the earth, who are brought up by the earth, who take their first step upon the earth, and who, in the end, rest in the earth. I am a poet.”

MAHATMA GANDHI

HE was neither a great warrior nor a king, and yet Mahatma Gandhi exercised greater power and commanded greater devotion than these. He was a man of God and his strength lay in his essential goodness and selflessness. The world lay at his feet because he had renounced it. This England trained barrister from Gujarat looked, dressed and behaved like a typical Indian peasant and won instant acceptance among the masses. The people chose to see in him not only a *sanyasi*, a holy *fakir*, but also the village elder to whom one could take one's doubts and disputes and obtain not only sympathy and understanding but also practical solutions.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born at Porbander in Kathiawar on October 2, 1869, in a Vaishya family. Both his father and grandfather, though not very highly educated, rose to become the Chief Ministers of small States in Kathiawar. His mother, Putlibai, was an intensely religious person and she left a lasting impression on Gandhiji's mind. He was married at the early age of thirteen to Kasturba.

After matriculating, at the age of eighteen, he went to England where he studied for three years and was called to the Bar. On return, he practised for two years in Bombay and Rajkot, but with no great success.

In 1893, Gandhi left for South Africa where he was to stay for more than twenty years. It was there that he thrived as a barrister and developed as a leader of men. Soon after his arrival, he had to suffer, like other Indians, many indignities, one of which marked a turning point in his life. A European guard pushed him out of a railway compartment although he

had a first-class ticket. As a result, Gandhiji had to spend the night in a cold, dark, waiting room. "There was a white man in the room; I was afraid of him," he wrote later. "What was my duty, I asked myself. Should I go back to India or should I go forward, with God as my helper, and face whatever was in store for me? I decided to stay and suffer. My active non-violence began from that date."

Thus started Mahatma Gandhi's political career, though he preferred to call it moral activity. He founded the Natal Indian Congress to fight for the rights of the Indian community. But, as there was no place for animosity in his non-violence, he helped the British Government in the Boer War and the Zulu rebellion by organizing an Ambulance Corps. The British Government gave him honours and awards, but their treatment of the Indians in general worsened. It was made compulsory for the Indians to register their finger-prints and Mahatma Gandhi resisted it with *satyagraha* which he defined as the force born of truth, love and non-violence. The agitation continued for eight years, during which 2,000 persons courted arrest. Ultimately, his non-violent *satyagraha* won and this objectionable rule was withdrawn.

Along with his legal practice and political activities, Gandhiji devoted himself to the study of religious and philosophical books. He studied the Upanishads, the Quran and the Bible and memorised the Gita. Ruskin's book *Unto This Last* left a deep impression on him and prompted his first experiment in community living at the Phoenix Settlement in South Africa. The aim of this colony, as well as of the Holstoy Farm which followed a few years later, was to develop among young workers the spirit of self-sufficiency, self-reliance and service. The inmates had to work as their own scavengers, cobblers, farmers, etc. Gandhiji's goal, as defined in *Hind Swaraj* or Indian Home Rule, (published in 1909) was to

achieve for the Indians "an exploitation-free society in which the ordinary individual can claim and defend his rights". This book was highly praised by the Russian author, Tolstoy.

(In 1915, when he was about 45, Gandhiji returned to India. His reputation had already preceded him. Poet Rabindranath Tagore had the vision to recognize Gandhiji's inherent greatness and at once hailed him as "Mahatma." [Mahatma Gandhi's first task was to set up an *ashram* near Ahmedabad where he settled down with 25 others who, like him, took the vow of truth, non-violence, celibacy, fearlessness, self-control, removal of untouchability, education] through mother tongue and use of *khadi* and other *swadeshi* products. Later, most of these principles were adopted by the Indian National Congress.

Having established a base, Mahatma Gandhi toured India extensively during the next two years. He wanted to know his land and his people thoroughly. In April 1917, he went to Champaran in Bihar to enquire into the grievances of the Indian labour serving on the indigo plantations owned by Europeans. He was immediately ordered by the Government to leave Champaran. He refused to do so and was arrested, but was later released when the Bihar Governor himself intervened. The Government appointed a committee with Gandhiji as a member to enquire into the grievances of the labour. Its recommendations were accepted by the Government and relief provided to the indigo plantation workers.

At first, Gandhiji was willing to assist the Government during the First World War. At this time, the Rowlatt Act was passed, empowering the Government to imprison without trial those suspected of sedition. Gandhiji reacted by calling upon the people to observe a country-wide *hartal*. He was arrested and the people showed their anger by indulging in mob violence. The apostle of non-violence at once called

off the agitation. The general awakening and unrest not only continued but was further aggravated by the Jallianwala Bagh massacre at Amritsar. To establish direct contact with the masses, Gandhiji started two weeklies, *Young India* in English and *Navajivan* in Gujarati.

Next year, Gandhiji identified himself with the cause of the Muslims who were agitating against the British treatment of the Turkish Sultan. The Khilafat Movement of 1920 marks a glorious period in the annals of Indian history, when Hindus and Muslims were drawn as close to each other as they were during the revolt of 1857. In the Non-cooperation Movement which followed, Hindus and Muslims vied with each other in surrendering their titles and honours and in boycotting schools, colleges, law courts and councils. It was at this time that nationalist Muslims broke away from the Muslim University, Aligarh, and founded the Jamia Millia. Gandhi was associated with the Jamia from the very beginning. Mahatma Gandhi also returned his Kaiser-e-Hind and other medals. He denounced the British Empire as 'a satanic system' and made it clear that non-cooperation, though a strictly moral movement, aimed at the overthrow of the Government.

During this period, Mahatma Gandhi also perceived the urgency of revitalizing the rural economy and proposed that every Indian should take to spinning on the *charkha*, and thus made the *charkha* a symbol of the freedom movement.

In February 1922, he proposed to launch a new Civil Disobedience Movement. The Government arrested him on March 13, 1922. At this trial, Mahatma Gandhi declared : "I am here to invite and submit to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is a deliberate crime and what appears to me to be the highest duty." He was sentenced to six years' imprisonment, but was released two years later after a surgical operation for appendicitis.

In 1924, Mahatma Gandhi was elected President of the Congress session at Belgaum. Soon after the country had conferred this privilege on him, he renounced the high honour and retired from politics, handing over the leadership to the Swarajists, Motilal Nehru and C. R. Das. He now devoted himself entirely to the development of *khadi* in the villages. He returned to politics in 1927 when the boycott of the Simon Commission was organized throughout the country.

In 1930, Gandhiji started another Civil Disobedience Movement. This time, he took up an apparently unimportant issue, *i.e.* the Salt Tax. He told the Government that he would break the law which prohibited salt-making by the public and led a procession from Ahmedabad to Dandi, about 380 kilometres (240 miles) away, with a party of 78 persons. On April 6, 1930, he broke the law by making salt and was arrested.

People later realized how wise Gandhiji was to choose this issue. The pinch of the enhanced price of salt was felt by all Indians alike and they responded with tremendous enthusiasm. This time, the Government had to arrest 100,000 persons throughout the country.

Gandhiji and his followers were released on January 26, 1931, when the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed. The Government made a show of reasonableness by holding a Round Table Conference and asked Gandhiji to attend it. There, the pretext of the minorities was used to deny freedom to India. While Mahatma Gandhi was in England, Government repression was stepped up and Jawaharlal Nehru, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Vallabhbhai Patel were arrested. The British declared the Communal Award which was a trick to drive a wedge among the Hindus by separating the Scheduled Castes from the Hindus. Mahatma Gandhi opposed it by going on fast. On the fifth day of the fast, a

compromise was reached. Soon after, he started the weekly *Harijan* and began touring the country to collect funds for the uplift of the Harijans (God's people), as he called the Scheduled Castes.

In 1934, Gandhiji resigned once more from the membership of the Congress and settled down in Sevagram. He concentrated on organizing *khadi* work. When the Congress won the elections of 1937, Gandhiji declared: "India is still a prison, but the superintendent allows the prisoners to elect the officials who run the jail."

The Second World War broke out in 1939. Among the Congress leaders, Gandhiji alone was in favour of giving support to the Allies unconditionally. This was because he believed that if the British people were true in saying that they were fighting for democracy, they would make India free. Actually, the Viceroy took the decision for India to enter the war without consulting the Indian people or their leaders. Consequently, the Congress ministries resigned and Gandhiji planned a campaign of individual *satyagraha*. The struggle continued for the next two years. When the Japanese swept across Malaya and Burma towards the Indian border, the British Government released the *satyagrahis* and sent the Cripps Mission. Gandhiji did not have much hope in this Mission and raised the slogan of "Quit India". In August 1942, the Congress Working Committee, under the presidency of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, adopted the "Quit India" resolution. Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Azad, Nehru, Patel and all the big leaders of the Congress were immediately arrested and massive repression was let loose. It was countered by an equally stiff popular resistance which took the form of a revolt. This popular movement was put down by violent and high-handed measures. Congress leaders were released only in 1945 when the war ended.

In 1946, a Cabinet Mission came to India to explore how self-government could be granted to Indians. For a time, it seemed that the Cabinet Mission would accept the Congress proposal because it recommended a united India with a federal government to deal with foreign affairs, defence, and communication. It was with this hope that Jawaharlal Nehru formed the Interim Government.

Mahatma Gandhi kept aloof from these political activities because communal riots had occurred in Calcutta in August 1946. These were later followed by riots in Bihar and East Bengal. Mahatma Gandhi went to live in East Bengal, walked bare-foot from one village to another in the riot-affected areas of Noakhali and Tippera, urging the return of peace and sanity. A miracle was wrought and peace was soon established in Bengal. Mahatma Gandhi now rushed to Bihar to take up the same task there. He was equally effective there too.

In June 1947, the Prime Minister of Britain announced the plan for partition which was later accepted by the Congress and the Muslim League. Mahatma Gandhi declared: "I do not agree with what my close friends have done or are doing; 32 years of work have come to an inglorious end." On August 15, 1947, when India was celebrating her Independence, Gandhiji was in riot-affected Calcutta. He fasted and prayed throughout the day and sent no message to the nation. To check the recurrence of riots in Calcutta, he went on a fast unto death, to be broken only if rioting stopped. This had an immediate effect and peace was established.

In September 1947, Gandhiji reached Delhi and settled down in the Bhangi Colony. He used to hold daily prayer meetings in which he appealed for Hindu-Muslim unity. On January 12, 1948, he again went on a fast because he felt

that the Muslims in Delhi were not being treated properly. The fast was broken when a Peace Committee formed of representatives of all communities promised to protect the life and the property of the Muslims.

On January 20, 1948, a bomb was thrown at Gandhiji's prayer meeting. Mahatma Gandhi was not disturbed and even appealed that the misguided youth who threw the bomb should be treated with clemency. Ten days later, shortly after 5 p.m., when Gandhiji was going to address his daily prayer meeting, a Hindu fanatic rushed forward and fired three shots at him. Mahatma Gandhi said "*He Ram*," and died. For harmony and unity between Muslims and Hindus, he paid the highest price.

Truth, non-violence, removal of untouchability, use of Khadi and Hindu-Muslim unity were Gandhiji's cherished ideals. The quest for truth was the keynote of his life and it gave him courage and strength. It was his overbearing love of truth that made him realise his own mistakes and weaknesses, to confess them openly and then try to atone for them. His life fully illustrates this point.

Mahatma Gandhi was a strict disciplinarian and a hard taskmaster for himself as well as for others. He believed that a sick body cannot produce healthy or noble ideas and, therefore, took great care of his health. Simple diet, hard work, regular walks and a cheerful disposition always kept him fit. Domestic worries did not bother him in the same manner as they do others, because he had expanded his family to include all the poor and the downtrodden of the earth.

VALLABHBHAI PATEL

A VALIANT freedom fighter and architect of India's political unity, Vallabhbhai Patel was aptly called the 'Iron Man of India'. In the galaxy of great Indian patriots and leaders, he stands out prominently.

Vallabhbhai Patel hailed from Karamsad in the Kheda district of Gujarat. Born on October 31, 1875, at Nadiad in the same district, Vallabhbhai came from a middle-class family of agriculturists. His father, Jhaverbhai Patel, and his mother, Ladbai, were of a religious bent of mind and were looked upon with respect and affection for their simple and pious life. It is said that his father had taken part in the Indian Revolt of 1857 against the British.

As a child, Vallabhbhai loved to help his father in the fields and his father taught him tables and simple problems in arithmetic. Even in his childhood, he showed remarkable endurance. Once he had a boil in his armpit and someone suggested that a barber be called in to puncture it with a red-hot iron needle. Accordingly, the barber was called but he dared not apply the hot rod to the child's boil. He feared that the child would not be able to bear it. Vallabhbhai thereupon scolded him and himself inserted it into the boil. He had such an amazing capacity to stand suffering.

Vallabhbhai received his primary education in his hometown and passed his Matriculation Examination from the Nadiad High School in 1897. Three years later, he passed the district pleaders' examination and started practice as a lawyer at Godhra. Sometime thereafter, he shifted to Borsad. Soon, he became a popular lawyer.

He aspired to become a barrister, but his father was a man of moderate means and could not afford to send him to England to qualify for the bar. However, when Vallabhbhai had saved enough money for the purpose, he proceeded to England to study law at the Inner Temple. He devoted himself to serious study there and got a first-class first at the Bar Examination. He returned from England in 1913 and joined the Bar at Ahmedabad, where he made a mark as a leading barrister with a flourishing practice. Simultaneously, he started taking part in the public activities of Ahmedabad.

In 1917, the monsoon crops completely failed in Kheda district on account of excessive rains. The agriculturists suffered heavy losses and were impoverished. They requested the authorities to postpone recovery of land revenue so as to give them relief. The Government of the time turned down the request and began to harass the peasants. Gandhiji, therefore, made up his mind to start *satyagraha* to get the peasants' grievances redressed. He wanted someone to devote all his time to the campaign he had in mind. Vallabhbhai enthusiastically offered his services. Caring little for his lucrative practice, he took active part in the peasants' movement under the leadership of Gandhiji. Gandhiji and Vallabhbhai exhorted the people not to pay the land revenue, notwithstanding any harassment by the Government. Vallabhbhai organised the struggle so efficiently that the Government had ultimately to yield and grant relief to the farmers.

This success brought him the affection of the people and he became an accepted popular leader. Then followed the agitation against the Rowlatt Act and, later, the Non-cooperation movement. Vallabhbhai gave up his practice and plunged headlong into politics. Thus began his new life, entirely devoted to the disinterested service of the people.

In 1921, the annual Congress session was held at

Ahmedabad. Here, Vallabhbhai was elected Chairman of the Reception Committee. In this capacity, he showed unexampled organising ability.

In 1923, Government imposed a special punitive tax on the Borsad Taluka to meet the expenditure on the additional police which, they maintained, was necessary for arresting dacoits. Vallabhbhai called upon the people not to pay the fine, whatever the consequences. Thereupon, the Government adopted a policy of repression. The people, however, stood resolute. Ultimately, the Government had to withdraw the fine. That was another feather in Vallabhbhai's cap.

Then came the Bardoli *satyagraha*. In 1928, the Government arbitrarily enhanced the land revenue in Bardoli Taluka without any justification. Vallabhbhai, therefore, started a passive resistance movement against the unjust demand of the Government. He advised the people to refuse to pay their land revenue dues. The Government began to confiscate the peoples' lands, seize their cattle and other property and arrest the volunteers. The thousands of men and women who joined the movement, however, refused to yield. They remained united, well-disciplined, steadfast and non-violent and showed great bravery and strength in the struggle. Vallabhbhai went from village to village, infusing the people with the national spirit and boosting up their morale. In one of his fiery speeches, he said : "Tell the Government 'you can do what you like, but only by force you shall get us to agree to what we do not like'. Cut me to pieces but I will not pay'. Challenge the Government to take up your land and carry it, if they can, to England. Our strength lies in cheerfully going through all sufferings that may be imposed on us...."

The Bardoli *satyagraha* shook the entire country. The Government ultimately showed readiness for negotiations to settle the dispute. Vallabhbhai suspended the *satyagraha* and

successfully negotiated a favourable settlement. The nation hailed him as a hero and conferred on him the title of 'Sardar'. Bardoli has become a landmark in the history of India's non-violent struggle for freedom. The Sardar emerged as an all-India leader and was elected President of the Karachi session of the Congress in 1931. It was at this session that the resolution on fundamental rights was adopted. These fundamental rights were later enshrined in the Indian Constitution.

The first Civil Disobedience Movement was launched in March 1930. Sardar Patel was the first to be arrested. On his release from jail, he again took part in the movement and was arrested thrice in eleven months.

In 1936, when the Congress contested the elections to the Provincial legislatures, he organised the campaign so well that it came to power with thumping majorities in most of the provinces. He was then called upon to take over as the Chairman of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee of the Congress. In this capacity, he co-ordinated and guided the work of the ministries in the various provinces.

In November 1940, he was arrested for individual civil disobedience and released on medical grounds the following year. He was arrested again on August 9, 1942, in connection with the "Quit India" movement and detained in the Ahmednagar Fort till June 15, 1945. He was released when the Viceroy convened the first conference at Simla for talks with political leaders.

In September 1946, when the Interim Government of India was formed at New Delhi, he became the Minister of Home Affairs and Information and Broadcasting. Later, when India gained complete independence on August 15, 1947, he was appointed Deputy Prime Minister and also given charge of the newly-created Ministry of States. Thereafter began his vital

work of consolidating India's newly-won freedom. He integrated the 550 and odd princely states within the Indian Union. He successfully performed the difficult task of welding the country into a unified whole. It was due to his tact, vision and statesmanship that India's unity was quickly achieved and consolidated.

Sardar Patel died at Bombay on December 15, 1950. In his death, India lost one of the most outstanding and brilliant political figures and an astute statesman of modern times.

SAROJINI NAIDU

ONE of the greatest of India's women, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu had for almost thirty years been closely associated with the freedom movement and with the women's campaign for social and legal reform. Before she spent her unbounded energy on these achievements, she was acclaimed as a great artist in lyrical poetry in the world of English letters.

{ Sarojini was born in Hyderabad on February 13, 1879. She was the eldest child of Dr. Aghorenath Chatterjee who originally came from a village in East Bengal. His family belonged to an ancient line of great Sanskrit scholars. They taught the scriptures and were much respected in Bengal. He cared nothing for caste and convention and is said to have broken the sacred thread and thrown it into the Ganges at the age of 14.

Aghorenath was a brilliant scientist as well as a poet in Urdu and Bengali and Sarojini's love of colour, her joy for living and the instinct to create were as much inherited as a part of her own individuality. Sarojini's mother, Varada Sundari, was a renowned singer, and wrote beautiful lyrics in Bengali. In Hyderabad, the girl was brought up in an atmosphere which had the best of both Hindu and Muslim cultures. Hyderabad was at that time regarded as the centre of Muslim learning. Besides English and Bengali, Sarojini acquired a wide knowledge of Urdu and Persian.

Sarojini/ passed the Matriculation Examination in her twelfth year in the first class, standing first in the Madras Presidency. She did not pass any other examination, not even in London and Cambridge, where she studied.

Early in life, Sarojini became a poet. She wrote afterwards that she inherited the poetic instinct from her parents. "One day", she writes, "when I was eleven, I was sighing over a sum in Algebra: it wouldn't come right ; but instead a whole poem came to me suddenly. I wrote it down. From that day my poetic career began. At thirteen, I wrote a long poem, *Lady of the Lake*—1,300 lines in six days. At thirteen, I wrote a drama of 2,000 lines, a full-fledged passionate thing that I began on the spur of the moment without forethought, just to spite my doctor who said I was very ill and must not touch a book."

While in England, Sarojini came in contact with the famous English critic, Edmund Gosse, who found her verses "skilful in form, correct in grammar and blameless in sentiment but Western in feeling and imagery". He advised her to be "a genuine Indian poet and not a clever imitator of the English classics". Sarojini then began writing poems with exclusive Indian background.

Sarojini Chattopadhyaya returned to India in September, 1898 and married Dr. Govindarajulu Naidu in December of the same year. The marriage became a landmark in the progress of social reform because inter-caste marriages were then almost unknown. The couple settled down happily in Hyderabad and four children were born to them.

As advised by Edmund Gosse, Sarojini stopped writing about things English and chose Hyderabad and Secunderabad, with their Hindu-Islamic culture, as background for her poems. She had imbibed the Muslim culture of her home town and gave expression to it in her poems. Her first book, *The Golden Threshold*, took the English world by storm. Published in 1905 in London, it became a best-seller. Other collections of poems, *The feather of the Dawn*, *Bird of Time* and *The*

Broken Wing were applauded by readers. Some of the poems were translated into French.

Despite her innate longing for the "rapture of song", Sarojini was being irrevocably drawn into the social and political life of the country. It was perhaps Gopal Krishna Gokhale who persuaded her to step out of her ivory tower. She met Mahatma Gandhi in 1914 and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru at the Congress session of 1916. Both of them greatly impressed her. She developed friendship with Rabindranath Tagore and C.F. Andrews. Mrs. Naidu delivered some brilliant speeches at the 1916 Congress and some other conferences of women and students. Her life work now began in earnest, the most important being efforts to bring about Hindu Muslim unity. Addressing the seventh All India Women's Conference, she declared that no Indian could be loyal to the country and yet be narrow and sectarian in spirit. She said, "No matter whether it was temple or mosque, church or fire-shrine, let them transcend the barriers that divided man from man."

Sarojini was deeply troubled at the many evidences of rift between the two communities. She admired Muslim culture and the Muslim way of life. From the earliest days, Mohamed Ali Jinnah, the Ali brothers and other Muslims were her devoted friends. She was present at the Lucknow session of the Muslim League which decided on cooperation with Hindus in national and social matters. Sarojini wrote that this marked a new era and inaugurated new standards in the history of modern Indian affairs. Her manifold activities included a campaign for women's franchise. She became president of every kind of important political conference and of students' conferences. She was also elected President of the Bombay Provincial Congress,

In July 1919, Sarojini went to England as a member of the deputation of the All-India Home Rule League, where she

pledged for the rights of women. She appeared before the Joint Committee on Indian Reforms. She supported franchise for women. During her stay in England, she addressed meetings and told the British public about the horror of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. She also joined in the Khilafat movement there.

Under instructions from the Indian National Congress, Mrs. Naidu went to Africa in 1924 as a delegate to the Kenya Indian Congress, which was fighting for the rights of Indian settlers. She roused the Indians to action and inspired them to carry on their fight non-violently. She also went to South Africa, where she received a resounding welcome. She presided over the East Africa Indian Congress in Mombasa. She returned to India by the middle of 1924 and was elected President of the Congress session held in Kanpur in December 1925. In her inspiring address, she made a fervent plea for unity. Her presidentship was an occasion for women to come forward and enter public life.

During 1928-29, Sarojini was sent as Mahatma Gandhi's representative to the United States and Canada. She was chosen to be the mouthpiece of the Congress and to counteract the effect of Miss Mayo's book, "Mother India", which had drawn a lurid picture of Indians and their way of living. She was sent to East Africa a second time in November 1929.

Sarojini took part in the Salt Satyagraha in 1930 and was sent to jail. In 1931, she accompanied Mahatma Gandhi to London to attend the second Round Table Conference. She represented Indian women there. Mrs. Naidu was arrested again in January 1932 for taking part in the Civil Disobedience Movement. She was imprisoned a third time during the Quit India Movement on August 9, 1942 along with Mahatma Gandhi. They were put together in the Agha Khan's palace. Despite her illness, Sarojini's presence enlivened the jail.

atmosphere. Mira Behn writes of Sarojini, "None of us, not even Bapu, had realized up to the time of incarceration together in the Agha Khan palace the full richness of Sarojini Devi's nature. Of course we all knew her poetic genius, her amazing oratory and her sparkling wit, but it was only now through direct experience that we came to know of the bigness of her motherly heart and the strength of her character in moments of suffering and sorrow." Owing to serious illness, Sarojini was unconditionally released on March 21, 1943. She retired to Hyderabad for some months but had to take charge of the Quit India movement very soon as almost all the other leaders were in jail.

Mrs. Naidu was at the peak of her career when she presided over the Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi in March 1947. She was chosen leader for Asia, and not only India. Her speech at the conference was a stupendous feat of rhetoric and inspiration.

When the nation attained independence, Sarojini Naidu became the Governor of Uttar Pradesh. She adorned that high office for less than two years. The Bharat Kokila left her earthen cage on March 2, 1949. A memorial has been raised on the bank of the Gomati in Lucknow where she was cremated.

In a tribute, Jawaharlal Nehru remarked that "she lifted politics to a higher artistic sphere. Whatever she touched, she infused with something of her fire....She represented in herself a rich culture into which flowed various currents which have made Indian culture as great as it is".

ABUL KALAM AZAD

AMONG the greatest Indians of this century Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had the rare combination of learning and revolutionary activity. He was an eminent scholar of Urdu, Persian and Arabic and a distinguished journalist and author. Along with his intellectual pursuits, he played an important and active role in the political life of India. With Gandhi, Nehru and Patel, he was one of the builders of modern India.

Azad came of a respectable family of Muslim religious leaders, who originally came from Herat and served under the Mughals in various capacities. One of his ancestors, Sheikh Jamaluddin, made a name for himself in the reign of Akbar. Khan-e-Azam, Akbar's brother, was one of his disciples. Sheikh Jamaluddin later earned the emperor's displeasure by refusing to sign a document which declared the latter as an authority on Islam. Another ancestor, Sheikh Muhammed, who flourished at the time of Emperor Jehangir, suffered imprisonment in the Fort of Gwalior for four years for refusing to bow before the king. That kind of respect, he told the emperor's courtiers, was due only to God and not to an earthly king.

Azad's father, Muhammed Khairuddin, was a scholar and mystic. He wrote numerous books in Arabic and Persian, and had a large number of disciples in Delhi, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Calcutta. After the Indian revolt of 1857, Sheikh Khairuddin migrated to Mecca, where he married the daughter of Sheikh Mohammad Zaher Watri, the famous scholar of Medina. Abul Kalam was born on November 11, 1888, in Mecca. A few years later, yielding to the request

of his disciples and admirers, Sheikh Khairuddin returned to India and settled down permanently at Calcutta.

Being the son of a religious leader, Abul Kalam received his early education in the traditional manner, directly under the supervision of his father. After acquiring proficiency in Arabic and Persian, he studied Philosophy, Mathematics, and Algebra. He had completed the entire course of study by the time he was sixteen. Soon after, he became a teacher of Philosophy, Mathematics and Logic, and quickly won recognition as a scholar in Arabic and Persian and in Islamic theology.

Abul Kalam had inherited from his father the temperament of a scholar, but his thirst for knowledge and his passion for action did not permit him to lead the quiet life of a teacher and religious leader. At the age of twenty, he toured the West Asian countries and came in contact with Arab and Turkish revolutionaries who were working for the freedom of their lands. Abul Kalam was inspired by these people. On his return to India, he entered politics and started *Al Illal*, an Urdu weekly, from Calcutta in 1912 to propagate his ideas.

Abul Kalam Azad could be described as a born writer and journalist. Even before he was twenty, he had been the editor of several journals. The *Lisanus Sidq* (The Voice of Truth) was his first venture in this direction, when he was barely fourteen years of age. By that time, he had also tried his hand quite successfully at poetry and even brought out a journal called *Nerang-e-Alam*, which published patriotic poetry by young poets.

Abul Kalam's prowess as a precocious writer and scholar is revealed by more than one incident. He had carried out a lengthy controversy by correspondence with a well-known Maulvi. The debate proved inconclusive, and the scholar invited Azad to come for a personal discussion. When the

youthful Maulana arrived, the old man politely inquired why his father had sent him instead of coming himself. Then there is the story of a meeting in Lahore where Maulana Azad was invited as the chief guest, but was refused entrance as no one believed that so young a man could be the honoured guest for whom everyone was waiting.

The first issue of *Al Hilal* was published on June 1, 1912, Abul Kalam was only twenty-four then, but he had already been accepted as 'Maulana' by Muslim theologists. From the very day of its inception, *Al Hilal* took its stand against the British rule in India. In the pages of this journal, he wrote editorials which were remarkable for their beauty of style and forcefulness of language. Through these the Maulana urged the Muslims of India to come out of their selfimposed political indifference and co-operate with their Hindu brethren in the task of freeing the country from foreign rule. This was a bold and new line of thinking for Indian Muslims and it created a great stir among them.

Ever since the unsuccessful Indian revolt of 1857, Indian Muslims had been living in an atmosphere of despair and lack of faith. Some Muslim leaders like Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan tried to restore the confidence of the Indian Muslims by pursuing a policy of gaining the favour of the ruling power and keeping away from the field of active politics. To Maulana Azad, this policy appeared not only unpatriotic, but also un-Islamic. He realised that the interests of Indian Muslims could be served only if they took part in the national struggle for independence. He felt that the liberation of India was necessary for the progress and prosperity of the entire Muslim world.

To some people, it seemed strange that Maulana Azad, who was descended from a family of religious leaders and who was

brought up in an orthodox manner, should become a champion of nationalism and progress, and freedom and democracy. But Maulana Azad saw no cleavage between his duties as a citizen of India as a devout Muslim. He made this quite clear in the course of a long statement before a British court which was trying him for sedition. He said : "I am a Muslim, and as such it is incumbent upon me to denounce oppression, underline its evils and expose it to the world. Ever since its emergence, Islam has laid emphasis on the fact that might is not right. According to Islam, right is right, and it is not given to any people to enslave others and exploit them."

This statement serves to explain the intimate and close relations which Maulana Azad maintained with Gandhiji. In spite of differences in faith and creed, both believed in truth and practised it. Maulana Azad was a staunch Muslim, so was Gandhiji a staunch Hindu. The British rulers in India had tried to create dissension between two major communities by pursuing a policy of 'divide and rule'. Both Mahatma Gandhi and Maulana Azad saw through this game. Their clear understanding of the meaning and influence of religion bound Maulana Azad and Gandhiji in a common aim and united Hindus and Muslims in the struggle against British imperialism.

The British Government, naturally, felt profoundly disturbed at the potential strength of Hindu-Muslim unity, represented by the emergence of Maulana Azad as a national leader. They immediately suppressed the *Al Hilal*, through which Maulana Azad preached his gospel. The Maulana soon started another paper, the *Al Balagh* and the Government interned him at Ranchi in 1916. Soon after his release in January 1920, he came in contact with Gandhiji and threw in his lot with him and the Congress. Ever since then, the

Maulana was in the forefront of the national struggle for freedom, participating fully in the Khilafat and Non-co-operation movements, the Civil Disobedience campaign, and finally in the Quit India movement. In the process, he underwent eleven years of imprisonment at various times. In recognition of his services to the nation, he was elected President of the Indian National Congress in 1923 at the early age of thirty-five. He again occupied that position during the crucial period of 1940 to 1946. During this period, he acted as the chief spokesman of the Congress in the delicate negotiations with the British Government culminating in the achievement of independence in 1947.

The success of the Maulana's leadership during this period lay in the clarity of his thought and the balance and sobriety of his judgement. He had the rare ability to get quickly at the essentials of a problem. He never took a one-sided view of any matter and was always willing to make allowance for people who differed with him. He never allowed his personal likes and dislikes to sway his judgement. Endowed with a wonderful capacity to reconcile rival points of view, he helped on several occasions to bring about amity and understanding among rival factions even inside the nationalist movement.

Fair and frank, the Maulana stood firm on his convictions. No vicissitude in his political life or the alignment of forces would make him change his stand. He was often criticised by the extremist and narrow-minded sections among both Muslims and Hindus. But the Maulana always stood firm in his faith and continued the pursuit of his life-long ideal of Hindu-Muslim unity.

Though better known as a politician, Maulana Azad was preeminently an intellectual and a scholar. Like some other

leaders in the national movement, if given a free choice, he would not have entered the political arena and would have been content with his quiet life of letters. In a subject country, however, there can be no free choice for the sensitive and the conscientious. It is not politics that draws such persons to political action. It is the cause of justice and patriotism.

Maulana Azad's political pre-occupations could not wean him away from his literary work. He wrote books which may be described as monumental. His *Tarjuman-al-Quran* is a classic in Muslim religious literature. A collection of his letters published under the title *Ghubar-e Khatir* is something of a masterpiece in Urdu literature. The power and magic of his writings shaped, in no small measures, the pattern of thought and political values of the Indian youth of his day.

In January 1947, Maulana Azad joined the Interim Government of India as Minister for Education. The same position he occupied for more than eleven years in the Government of free India. As a senior member of the Indian Government, and as a close personal friend and adviser of Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Azad played a powerful role in shaping the destiny of free India. In the international field, his personal influence in the Muslim countries of West Asia helped forge bonds of friendship between them and India. At home, he presided over a phenomenal expansion in the field of education. Technical education was given the place it deserved, scholarship was encouraged, and cultural communication between the various regions of India was strengthened. Interest in literature, music and the graphic arts was revived with the creation of national academics. Awards were instituted for outstanding individual achievements in these fields. Pride in India's past and a new hope in India's future was generated. When Maulana Azad breathed his last on February 22, 1958,

it was a loss deeply and widely felt both in India and abroad. Paying a singular tribute to him in the Indian Parliament Jawaharlal Nehru said : "We have had great men and we will have great men, but that peculiar and special kind of greatness that Maulana Azad represented is not likely to be reproduced in India or anywhere else."

DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR

ALMOST all the countries with ancient culture are marked by many social inequalities and religious evils ; the more the ancient culture the more are the inequalities and in-human practices. India is no exception to this phenomena. The Indian subcontinent is one of the ancient lands where the civilization and culture flowered at the earliest stages of human history. It is no wonder that, we have many castes and sub-castes in addition to the outcastes or the so called untouchables. In the other countries and climes, some sudden social upheavals swept away these barbaric practices and inhuman inequalities, while in a few countries some greatmen dedicated their lives to eradicate the social evils and in instilling some moral and mental courage among the suppressed and oppressed sections of the society. Dr. Ambedkar is one such great leader and liberator rebell and revolutionary who waged a life long struggle in the emanicipation of crores of suppressed and oppressed people in India who are labelled by society as outcastes and treated as untouchables.

The phrase 'from Dust to Doyen' describes the full life picture of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. Born in one of the numerous untouchable castes and humiliated as an untouchable, barred out of hostels and hotels, Dr. Ambedkar, by dint of his industry and perseverance, rose to the position of a great scholar and statesman, leader and liberator and the Architect of the Indian Constitution. The life, the struggles and the achievements of Dr. Ambedkar are bound to serve as an ideal for many born in the most unfortunate circumstances, in overcoming the hurdles of life with unflinching devotion and

dedication. Although his life with all the sacrifices, struggles and scholarship, is mainly devoted for the liberation of crores of untouchables, from their age-old bondage and ushering in a new era of hope among the suppressed humanity, it is no less a glorious fight for ushering in India, a social and economic democracy. His life is a dedication to human freedom and human values in the Society.

Dr. Ambedkar hails from a poor family of Mahar caste, one of the numerous untouchable castes, in Maharashtra. Born on April 14, 1891 to mother Bhim Bai and father Ramji Sackpal at Mahu in Madhyapradesh, he was named Bhim Rao. Ramji Sackpal was a Subedar in the army at Mahu. Within two years of Bhim's birth, Ramji Sackpal retired from the army and the family moved to Satara and then on to Bombay, where the early education of Bhim took place. At the High School one of the Brahmin teachers took fancy for Bhim and changed Bhim's surname to his own Surname 'Ambedkar' to which name, he achieved fame. Despite these oases of warmth, there was scorching desert all around him. Bhim and his brother were made to sit in a corner of the class and many teachers would not touch them or put questions to them for fear of being polluted. Outside the school, the experience is still bitter, all of which deeply impressed on the young mind. Despite these heavy odds, he completed his matriculation examination in 1907. He passed B. A. in 1912 with the help of a scholarship granted to him by the Maharaja of Baroda. In getting this scholarship another Brahmin teacher and well known social reformer K. A. Keluskar arranged an audience with the Maharaja of Baroda. It is an irony of the history that the Brahmins, the upholders of the caste system and gradation of the human-beings, played a major role in the education of Bhim Rao Ambedkar, who, in later years became the arch enemy of 'Brahminism'.

Again with the aid of scholarship from the Maharaja of Baroda, Bham Rao Ambedkar left for New York in 1913, and joined the Columbia University. Here in an atmosphere free from the oppressive social system back at home, he started his studies. For eighteen hours a day, went on the endless digging for knowledge and this continued for months and years. He obtained M. A. in 1915. Simultaneously he worked on a thesis for Ph. D in economics which was accepted latter. In the same year he joined the London School of Economics and Grays Inn for law. Although Ambedkar was following the motto of 'hard study and spare diet' he had to leave the studies in the middle as the scholarship was terminated and he was called back to India by the Dewan of Baroda.

Even during his studies at the Columbia University, Dr. Ambedkar's mind was preoccupied with political and social problems and the pitiable lot of the untouchables back at home. In one of the letters, addressed to a friend in 1913 he wrote, "We must now entirely give up the idea that parents give birth 'Janma' to the child, and not destiny 'Karma'. Parents can mould the destiny of the children ; and if we but follow this principle, be sure that we shall soon see better days and our progress will be greatly accelerated if male education is pursued side by side with the female education, the fruits of which you can very well see in our own daughter". "Let your mission" concludes the youngman of twenty, "therefore be to educate and preach the idea of education to those at least who are near to and in close contact with you".

According to the bond, Dr. Ambedkar had to serve the Baroda State, for ten years. He was appointed as military secretary. But there too, his birth as an untouchable turned everything topsy-turvy. His high academic honours could not wash the stigma of untouchability from him. He was treated by his staff and peons as a leper. They flung the 'bundles

of papers and files at his desk. They rolled the mats when he got-out to go. And the insulting treatment reached its epitome when he could not locate a house or hotel to live in. Expressing his inability to improve the matters, the Dewan of Baroda agreed to waive the contract and Ambedkar returned to Bombay. It was in such humiliating and unbearable circumstances, Dr. Ambedkar vowed "If I fail to do away with the abominable thralldom and inhuman injustice under which the class into which I am born, has been groaning, I will put an end to my life with a bullet".

From that moment onwards, Dr. Ambedkar devoted his entire energies and dedicated his life in the mission of uplifting the crores of untouchables. But for short periods devoted to earning a livelihood as a college profesasor, he continuously engaged in awakening the untouchable masses to unite and fight for their rights and live as dignified human-beings. However, the task before him was too big as for a renowned General like the Napoleon Bonaparte. Centuries of enslavement and the oppressive force all around drove always all spirits and hopes of liberation from the minds of the numerous untouchable castes. He had to wake them up and prepare them for a struggle to achieve human rights. On the other side, there are their oppressive forces represented by ignorant orthodox and superstitious of the caste-Hindus, to whom he had to appeal to persuade and threaten. Ambedkar hated the sense of dependency and abhorred the feeling of patronage of the caste-Hindu reformers. Ambedkar was a believer in the principle that self-help is the best help. He diagnosed the disease correctly. He knew from history that injustice is not removed till the sufferer himself does away with it by his own exertions and actions. He said that as long as the conscience of a slave does not burn with hatred

for his slavery, there is no hope for his salvation. "Tell the slave that he is a slave and he will revolt" was the slogan raised by Ambedkar. The social reform is a thorny path. People may sprinkle rose water on the roads of the political liberators and orators. But reverse is the fate of those who launch a ruthless attack to liberate society from its ills, superstitions, outworn traditions and evil customs. Take the case of Raja Ram Mohan Roy who was driven out of his home by his own parents as he opposed orthodoxy. Ambedkar faced a ruthless opposition from the caste-Hindus whose customs and superstitions he was attacking. In this epic struggle to enhance the human freedom, fortunately many eminent caste-Hindus became the followers of Dr. Ambedkar.

In November 1918, he joined Sydenham College as a professor of political economics and worked there for two years. With his little savings, some help from the Maharaja of Kolhapur, and with a loan of five thousand rupees from his friend, Naval Bhathena, he left for England in 1920 to complete his studies in Law and economics. He resumed his studies at the London School of Economics and kept his terms at Gray's Institute of law. He turned his attention to the London Museum where the relics of the saintly and scientific thoughts are preserved, where the ruins of the antique world are displayed and where Karl Marx, Muzzini, Lenin and Savarkar had dug for knowledge and digested it. In the Museum, he poured over books from morning till evening. Time was an important factor with him. To save both money and time, he would go without lunch. After this the second round of reading begins at his residence. The endless reading would go on till early morning. He told his room-mate that his poverty and want of time require him to finish his studies as early as possible.

During these studies in London for his academic eminence, he had not forgotten the real aim in his life. He could not for a minute forget the dumb faces of the untouchables in India. He took up this matter with the Secretary of State for India and also held discussions with Mr. Vithalbhai Patel in London. Neither he could forget the alien political realities of the nation. In a paper read before the Students Union and also in his famous thesis "The Problem of the Rupees", he exposed the hollowness of the British policies in India, which caused a stir in the academic world of London and Ambedkar was suspected to be an Indian Revolutionary.

Ambedkar was now a Barrister reinforced by a London Doctorate of Science, an American Doctorate in Philosophy and studies at the Bonn University. He was thus well equipped as a lawyer and an authority to challenge the scholars of economics and sociology in India and to storm the Indian citadel.

He entered the profession of law for a living as it affords the freedom and the leisure to dedicate himself to the aim of his life 'the upliftment of the millions of untouchables in India'.

The untouchables in India number a few crores. Their population is equal to the combined population of England Ireland and Scotland. In fact every third person among Hindus, is an untouchable. And they lead a life of utter-privation and inhuman bondage. Before Ambedkar a galaxy of princes, patriots, saints, humanitarians and rationalists tried to improve the lot of the untouchables but in vain. All these reformers coming as they are from the upper castes could not understand or infuse the needed strength among the untouchables to free them, from their age-old bondage. Neither they could threaten the orthodox Hindus nor could they prove their sincerity for they lacked the vision and that revolutionary fervour to reconstruct the Hindu society. Gandhi too

launched a movement and advertised his aim to improve the lot of the untouchables but in vain. Gandhi believed in caste-system and the four *Varnas*. It was his aim to keep the castes intact and raise the untouchables to the level of a fifth caste. On the other hand, Veer Savarkar aimed to reconstruct the caste-Hindu society by uprooting the caste altogether. Though he could not do much or achieve anything, he extended his full support to Dr. Ambedkar's movement for the abolition of caste and untouchability. Ambedkar awakened the untouchable masses with his fiery speeches, chastised them for their pitiable lives, instilled courage and inspired in them, the confidence to fight for the dignity of their lives. He taught them that 'liberty is not received as a gift and it has to be fought for.' Millions and millions of untouchables heard him with pin-drop silence and resolved to sacrifice their lives to live a life of dignity. It was indeed the noblest mission of his life that aimed at adding to the nation's strength, health, wealth, honour and culture by relieving these dumb millions. Ambedkar gave a clarion call to the untouchables and at the same time sounded a warning to the indifferent, callous, caste-ridden Hindus. He wielded the untouchables into a force and even the orthodox realised the strength of his movement. He became the uncrowned king of the untouchable masses. The mass movement generated and the inspiring leadership of Ambedkar forced other parties and personalities to take up the cause of untouchables. Dr. Ambedkar, the messiah of the untouchables talked to them in very caustic manner. He remonstrated them in vain that was at once teasing, carping and goading. He cried out "My heart breaks to see the pitiable sight of your faces and to hear your sad voices. You have been groaning from time immemorial and yet you are not ashamed to hug your helplessness as an inevitability. Why did you

not perish in the pre-natal stage instead ? Why do you worsen and sadden the picture of the sorrows, poverty, slavery and burdens of the world with your deplorable, despicable and detestable miserable life ? You had better die and relieve of this world if you can not rise to a new life and if you can not rejuvenate yourselves. As a matter of fact, it is your birth right to get food, shelter and clothing in this land in equal proportion with every individual high or low. If you believe in living a respectable life, you believe in self-help which is the best help." The spate of burning speeches like these had a telling effect on their minds which roused them against the inhuman exploitation. Such inspiring speeches and leadership had awakened the masses and launched a struggle for emancipation. Dr. Ambedkar gave a clarion call to his people. He advised them to *educate, agitate and organise*. Ambedkar's speeches and actions stirred the depressed class people into action, and they organised mass meetings and all India conferences for the first time. They developed the confidence to launch mass agitations against their oppressors.

Ambedkar participated in the Round Table Conference in London as the representative of the depressed classes of India. For sometime, the depressed classes of India expressed reservations on the transfer of power to the Indians by the British. But Dr. Ambedkar, participating in the discussions of the first Round Table Conference, castigated the British rule in India, and declared that the progress of the untouchables educationally and economically, can be possible with the transfer of power from the British to the Indians. For such a bold declaration in the face of the British rulers, Dr. Ambedkar was hailed as one of the greatest patriots and a nationalist to the core. However, he wanted that power should be transferred with special safe-guards wherein the untouchables will have the opportunity to share power with the caste-Hindus and the

Muslims in India. He opposed the very idea of the caste-Hindus replacing the Britishers as rulers where in the untouchables will be left at the bottom rung as serfs and slaves.

As a result of his efforts, special provisions were made to get the representation of the depressed classes in the legislatures and special reservations in the matter of administration. Gandhi opposed separate electorates to the Scheduled castes on the plea that it will divide the Hindu community. Gandhi is more interested in the unity of the Hindu community and ready to safeguard the same even by sacrificing the freedom and progress of the untouchables. But for Dr. Ambedkar Unity or Division of the Hindu community does not matter. He wanted progress of the untouchables and they should be as free as any other citizen of this land. He was not ready to sacrifice the rights and dignity of the depressed classes for any price. He asked the meaning of freedom and *swaraj* if the depressed classes population in crores do not get the fundamental rights for life, liberty and equality ? He said "I am not going to support a tyrannising majority simply because it happens to speak in the name of the country...whenever there is any conflict of interests as between the country and myself, the country will have precedence, as between the country and the depressed classes, the depressed classes will have precedence". The nation and the freedom counts for nothing if a third of its population fail to get their freedom and become partners in the administration of the national affairs. Dr. Ambedkar tried in vain to create an opening for his people into Hindu society. He had to fight for securing his people the right of drinking water from public places, for the liberty of wearing good dress and of using metal utensils and for the right of receiving education. About the vast changes that came with the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar, Veer Savarkar observed "Ambedkar's personality, erudition and capacity to

lead and organise would have by themselves marked him out as an outstanding asset to our nation. But in addition to that the inestimable services he has rendered to our motherland in trying to stamp-out untouchability and the results he has achieved in instilling a manly spirit of self-confidence in millions of depressed classes, constitute an abiding, patriotic as well as humanitarian achievement. The very fact of the birth of such a towering personality among the so-called untouchable castes could not but liberate their souls from self-depression and animate them to challenge the supererogatory claim of the so called touchables”.

One of the main demands of Dr. Ambedkar which he achieved was ‘reservation’ at a fixed percentage of government posts for the depressed classes. This ‘reservation’ sprang from three reasons. The Doctor is absolutely convinced that but for the predominance of the caste-Hindus in government services, it would have been well nigh impossible for the caste-Hindus to perpetuate tyranny over the depressed classes. Secondly, he wanted depressed classes as a part and parcel of ruling and rhyming thus sharing power in a democratic system. Thirdly, the jobs increased the possibility of their getting justice in government and their economic independence allows them to struggle for justice. In his view, the nation counts for nothing if one third of the population fail to get their rights of life, liberty and equality. He reminded the depressed classes, ‘For ages, they had remained dumb. They could not with justice blame the government or the reformers for their condition!’ Ambedkar observed ‘Lost rights are never regained by begging and by appeals to the conscience of the usurpers but by relentless struggle—goats are used for sacrificial offerings and not lions’.

Such an inspired leadership and such exhortations moved millions and millions of the depressed classes to struggle for

their fundamental rights. Millions listened to him with rapt attention wherever he spoke.

In his struggle for the emancipation of the oppressed people of India Dr. Ambedkar criticised the caste system and the superstition of the caste-Hindus. He wanted total abolition of castes and reconstruction of the Hindu society for its survival. Ambedkar said "The outcaste (untouchable) is a by-product of the caste-system. There will be outcastes as long as there are castes. Nothing can emancipate the outcastes except the destruction of the caste system. Nothing can help Hindus and ensure their survival in the coming struggle except the purging of Hindu faith of this odious and vicious dogma. Such an enlightened criticism of Hinduism evoked strong reaction among the orthodox and Ambedkar became their symbol of hatred. Just as he provoked the untouchables to awake, rebell and revolt, Ambedkar was ruthless in his attack on the caste system and the superstitions. However, he explained that he hated the system of casteism or the Brahminism and not the Brahmins. As a result many eminent Brahmins joined his movement and participated in it actively. Dr. Ambedkar had been a great champion of the equal rights of women. He abhorred the idea of women to be slaves of men. He measured the progress of any community and country by the degree of progress achieved by their women. With foresight he warned against having too many children. He said "Those who will marry will have to keep in mind that to have too many children is a crime. The paternal duty lies in giving each child a better start than its parents had. Above all let every girl who marries stand by her husband's claim to be her husband's friend and equal and refuse to be his slave".

The Constituent Assembly to draft a Constitution for the Independent India met on December 9, 1946. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru introduced a resolution on the declaration of

the objectives of the Independent India. However, Dr. M. R. Jayakar moved on an amendment seeking the postponement of its passing till the Muslim League and the states representatives came into the Constituent Assembly. This irritated the Congress bosses and they drowned his speech in a chorus of derision. But the resolution became an issue of hot discussion. And then the President of the Assembly quite unexpectedly requested for the views of Dr. Ambedkar, the avowed enemy of the Congress who had lashed at their ideology and scoffed at their leader privately and publicly. In response to the request, a massive figure with a long head, a stubborn chin and an oval face rose to support Jayakar's amendment. The Congress members were itching their palms to drown their avowed enemy with the mover of the resolution. In a powerful speech with unlimited command of language, the learned Doctor said he would not ask whether the House had the right to pass such a resolution. It might be it had the right. "The question I am asking is," he asserted with a glow in his eyes, "is it prudent for you to do it? Is it wise to do it? Power is one thing and wisdom and prudence quite a different thing." He therefore, made a fervent appeal for its postponement and make another attempt for conciliation and said, "let us prove by our conduct that we have not only the power but also the wisdom to carry with us all sections of the country and to make them march on that road which is bound to lead us to unity". So forceful was the speech, the hands that were itching to smash him, rang with approbation and the Congress members continuously cheered every word of the speech. It was a red letter day in amazing life of Dr. Ambedkar. The sacrileger had now become a counsel, the scoper had become a friend. The consideration of the resolution was postponed. Thus Dr. Ambedkar commanded the respect and regard of the whole House which lead to further developments. Dr. Ambedkar was

invited to be the first Law Minister of the Independent India and latter was elected chairman of the drafting committee of the constitution.

How he worked and why was he called the Chief architect of the Constitution can be seen from the speech of T. T. Krishnamachari which he made on November 5, 1948 in the Constituent Assembly. He invited the attention of the House saying "The House is perhaps aware that of the seven members nominated by you, one had resigned from the House and was replaced. One died and was not replaced. One was away in America and his place was not filled up and another person was engaged in State Affairs and there was void to that extent. One or two people were far away from Delhi and perhaps reasons of health did not permit them to attend. So it happened ultimately that the burden of drafting the Constitution fell on Dr. Ambedkar and I have no doubt that we are grateful to him for having achieved this task in a manner which is undoubtedly commendable".

The mission of Dr. Ambedkar's life was the establishment of human dignity, development of self-respect among the down-trodden classes, and attainment of self-salvation. Ambedkar was a great teacher who taught the common man to stand on his own feet. He ridiculed the idea of fate and belief in it and asked them to seek refuge in reason. From 1938 onwards Dr. Ambedkar made repeated announcements rather issued threat that he and the depressed classes would leave Hinduisim and embrace another faith. Many eminent Hindus including Veer Savarkar appealed to Dr. Ambedkar against the step with promises to work for the economic and social progress of the depressed classes and removal of untouchability, where upon Dr. Ambedkar promised to wait and see for five or ten years.

A decade passed peacefully after Independence. The curse

of untouchability showed some signs of abatement and nothing more. But the social status of the depressed classes did not rise. The castes and castism, however, became more solidified and began to play an increasing role not only in the social field but more so in the field of politics and elections. Viewing this dismal situation, Dr. Ambedkar embraced Buddhism in 1956 along with a ten lakh followers. For sheer numbers, this event surpasses all the records of the history. Such is the spell of the personality of Dr. Ambedkar on his followers.

Dr. Ambedkar was a great thinker and a prolific writer. His pen was as sharp as was his tongue. He wrote books to scholars and to uphold human causes ! Some of the wellknown books are 'The Untouchables', 'Who were the Shudras ?' 'What Gandhi and Congress had done to the Untouchables', 'Pakistan or Partition of India', 'Gandhi, Ranade and Jinnah', 'Annihilation of Castes', and 'Buddha and his Dharma'.

For the scholar in Dr. Ambedkar, books were his greatest friends and companions. He had purchased over one lakh books which included very many rare books. Pandit Malaviya had once offered him two lakhs of rupees for his library. And Birla had offered any amount quoted by Ambedkar. But Ambedkar declined and said books were the very breath of his life.

Dr. Ambedkar had been a great politician and a statesman par excellence. He was the founder of the Independent Labour Party in 1936, the Scheduled Castes Federation in 1942 and the Republican Party of India in 1954. And above all, Ambedkar was a great teacher and an eminent educationist. He was the founder of the People's Education Society and under it, a chain of colleges and schools were established to popularise education among the people. The Siddhartha College in Bombay with a host of faculties, was the first

college started by the great leader. Latter the Milind Viswavidyalay in Aunragabad was started which is today throbbing with intellectual activity and high degree of scholarship. In fact it is the first of the college in the backward Marathwada region which latter became the nucleus around which the present Marathwada University developed.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

THE people of our country will always remember Jawaharlal as a great freedom fighter, a crusader for peace, a superb politician and one of the ablest nation-builders. Those who saw him or worked with him had no doubt that he was a man of the masses; he seemed to inspire the people and was in turn inspired by them. And yet, he "was born with a silver spoon in his mouth," as the late Maulana Mohammad Ali used to say. (The only son of his father, Jawaharlal was born on November 14, 1889. His father, Motilal Nehru, a prosperous and eminent lawyer in Allahabad, was highly westernised in outlook and his son was brought up like a little English prince, dressed in sailor suits and Scottish kilts. Jawaharlal was educated by a series of private tutors at home and had no contact with boys of his age placed in the general Indian environment.)

(When 15 years old, Jawaharlal was taken to England and admitted to the Harrow Public School. Later, he joined the Trinity College, Cambridge, where he studied Chemistry, Geology and Botany. He immensely liked the subjects and, in the serene atmosphere of the university diligently studied his textbooks as also the works of famous thinkers. He heard visiting Indian speakers and conversed with them, thus widening his vision every day. After three years, he left Cambridge with a second class honours degree in the Natural Sciences Tripos. It was then decided that he should follow his father's profession. For the next two years, he studied law in the Inner Temple, London. But the seed of discontent with his environment had begun to take root in the mind of the young graduate.

"I have become," he said many years later, "a queer mixture of East and West, out of place everywhere, at home nowhere."

In 1912, he returned to India, a full-fledged lawyer, ready to take his place alongside his father in the Allahabad High Court. Fate, however, had ordained otherwise. His education in England, the contact with liberal politicians and philosophers and the depressing contrast between conditions in India and England had produced a deep ferment in his mind. The background for a patriotic role had been prepared already ; when time came, he made a head-on jump into politics.

Barely six years after joining the Allahabad Bar, he became the Secretary of the Home Rule League, Allahabad Branch. Home Rule was a movement started by Mrs. Annie Besant for the liberation of India. But this did not satisfy him and he sought a more active, countrywide movement for the freedom of the country. It was, therefore, natural that when Mahatma Gandhi decided to launch his *satyagraha*, Jawaharlal was enthused by the campaign, which he felt was a way out of the tangle, a method of action which was straight and open and possibly effective. The *satyagraha* on April 6, 1919, was a big success. The unity and strength of the Indian people sent the British rulers into panic and they let loose a reign of terror. At Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar, 379 Indians were killed and about 12 hundred wounded when one General Dyer ordered machine-gun fire on a peaceful meeting of unarmed people. These tragic incidents strengthened the resolve of Jawaharlal that the country must attain independence within the shortest possible time ; it also converted Motilal to the beliefs of his son and Gandhiji.

Jawaharlal suffered his first imprisonment while organising strikes and hartals during the visit of the Prince of Wales in 1922-23. His father, mother and sister followed suit and the

whole family trooped into prison from their palatial residence, Anand Bhavan. In 1923, Jawaharlal was elected Secretary of the All-India Congress Committee. He also became a member of the Allahabad Municipal Board and later, its Chairman.

The young man with a western outlook, who had emerged from Trinity College, Cambridge, attired in a lawyer's gown, had changed into an active freedom fighter within ten years. But the process of evolution had only begun. New responsibilities brought new experiences and every new suffering in the following years added to the zeal of the young man to stake everything for his country and its people.

The year 1929 marked a turning point, both for Jawaharlal and for the Congress. He presided over the Lahore session of the Congress at which the famous independence resolution was passed. So far, the Congress was only fighting for Dominion Status. But the word "Swaraj" was now to mean complete independence. Jawaharlal was re-elected President of the Congress in 1930. The following year, he was arrested as one of the leaders of the Civil Disobedience Movement, which Gandhiji had started.

From the Naini Central Prison, where he was detained several times, he wrote long and interesting letters to his daughter Indira, now Indira Gandhi, on the history of the peoples of the world, of the bright past of India, and of the brighter future which awaited the country. He never felt defeated in prison and the undying hope that India would be free sustained him through moments of grief and pain.

After his release, he devoted all his time and attention to work for the relief of the earthquake victims in Bihar. But the rulers considered him too dangerous to remain free. He was arrested again in February 1934 and kept in detention throughout the following year. In the meantime, his wife,

Kamala, had fallen seriously ill. Jawaharlal was released in September 1934 to enable him to take her to Europe for treatment. But her health had been shattered and, five months later, this brave lady, who was Jawaharlal's comrade in the country's battle for freedom, breathed her last in Lausanne, Switzerland.

In 1938 came Jawaharlal's visit to Spain during the Civil War. It was a gruelling experience. He had watched with apprehension the rise of the Fascist powers in Europe and the terroristic measures they adopted to curb democracy. A staunch democrat he detested dictatorship in all its forms. He firmly believed that individual liberty and freedom of thought and action provide the base on which individuals and nations grow to their full stature. Without them, life is meaningless.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, the Congress, on Jawaharlal's initiative, passed a resolution clarifying the stand of the Indian people. They maintained that, if Britain was fighting for democracy and a world order based upon it, for democracy and liberty, she must end her occupation of India. During the individual *satyagraha* campaign launched by Gandhiji to press home this demand Jawaharlal was arrested on October 31, 1940 and sentenced to four years' imprisonment. He was released in December 1941 along with other leaders.

The Cripps Mission came to India to discuss and decide upon the constitutional changes in the country. Jawaharlal led the Congress team in the talks. The changes proposed did promise some progress for the country. But the mission failed because of the intransigence of the Muslim League and the policy of its appeasement followed by the British.

The failure of the Cripps Mission looked like an end of all

hopes of a peaceful transfer of power. The position was desperate and, at the AICC session in 1942 at Bombay. Jawaharlal moved the famous "Quit India" resolution. He was arrested soon after and taken to Ahmadnagar Fort to serve his longest ever detention. He was released in January 1945.

The Labour Government had come to power in England after the Second World War. The new British leaders realised that transfer of power to India was inevitable and they sent out in 1946 a Cabinet Mission for talks with Indian leaders. On behalf of the nationalists (Congress Party), Jawaharlal conducted negotiations with the British and the Muslim League for bringing freedom to India. A united free India, with equal rights and opportunities for everyone, irrespective of religion, caste, creed and colour formed the main plank of Jawaharlal's case in these talks. In the meantime, he accepted the British invitation to form the Interim Government. He was sworn-in as Vice-Chairman and Member for External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations. In the talks, Jawaharlal fought desperately to preserve the country's unity, pleading with the Muslim League and the British and appealing to the good sense of the masses. But all his efforts failed to avert the tragic partition of India. When Independence came on August 15, 1947, he became the first Prime Minister of free India and held this position continuously until his death. }

In 1948, Jawaharlal had the unique distinction of being called upon to address the United Nations Assembly in Paris. His great efforts for promoting peace in the world and brotherhood among men won applause from every corner. In later years, he showed that these were not empty words ; he meant every word of what he said. Whether it was the warlike threats of China and Pakistan to India, or threats to peace anywhere in the world, he tried and worked for a peaceful

settlement. Jawaharlal's love for our country and its integrity was unbounded. When China invaded India in October 1962, he became a real man of action, organising defence and inspiring the soldiers. It was his leadership that enabled India to withstand the massive aggression of the Chinese.

He was indeed a crusader for peace—abroad and at home. Above all, he could not bear to see any one suffer from hunger and want. Kashmir, his ancestor's home, had always been an object of special love for him. He was enthralled by the beauty of its snow-capped mountains and smiling valleys. But more than the enchanting beauty of the place, or its strategic importance, Jawaharlal looked upon it as a challenge to his dearly held ideals and values. The backwardness and appalling poverty of its people distressed him. The one object of the Government on which he presided was, he said, "to ensure the freedom and the progress of the people there." Jawaharlal looked upon Kashmir as a triumph of secularism. Till he breathed his last, on May 27, 1964, he worked ceaselessly for his ideals, for bettering the lot of the common man, for bringing about an unassailable unity in India and for preserving peace in the world.

Jawaharlal has indeed made an indelible imprint on history. But this is not how he wanted to be remembered by his countrymen. To quote from his will, he only wanted the people to remember him as one who "with all his mind and heart, loved India and the Indian people and they in their turn were indulgent to him and gave him of their love most abundantly and extravagantly."

SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

IN the history of India's freedom struggle, the place of Subhas Chandra Bose is unique. He alone, among India's leaders, thought of fighting the brute force of the British rulers by armed might. It is a tribute to his organizing capacity that he was able to raise a modern army of about 75,000 men and women. He inspired these men with intense patriotic fervour and a burning desire to free their enslaved motherland.

However, Subhas Chandra Bose had much more in common with Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru than is generally realized. Like them, he belonged to an educated and prosperous family and was educated in England (Cambridge) and had travelled widely all over the continent of Europe. He had leftist leanings and looked at India in an international perspective. In all these traits, he resembled Nehru. At the same time, he had a deeply spiritual nature. His quest for truth and the right *guru* had taken him to each and every corner of India. While Gandhi's *guru* was Gokhale and Nehru sat at Gandhi's feet, Subhas chose to follow Vivekananda and Aurobindo Ghosh in the spiritual sphere and Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das in politics. Each of the three great leaders of India—Gandhi, Nehru and Bose—had a special regard for their Muslim countrymen.

Subhas Chandra Bose was the sixth son and ninth child of Janakinath Bose, a lawyer. He was born at Cuttack (Orissa) on January 23, 1897. Among his ancestors, Mahipati Bose (Subudhi Khan) and Gopinath Bose (Purandar Khan) and some others held the offices of ministers and naval commanders under the Muslim rulers of Bengal. 'The quarters in which we

lived", says Bose in his autobiography, "was prominently a Muslim one and our neighbours were mostly Muslims....We took part in their festivals, in Muharram for instance, and enjoyed their *akharas*. I cannot remember ever to have looked upon Muslims as different from ourselves in any way, except that they go to pray in a mosque."

The broad-minded views of Bose did not extend to Muslims alone. Describing his childhood, he said : "In my infancy, I was brought into touch with English people, English education and English culture. After that I went back to our culture—both classical and modern."

At school, Bose was a brilliant student, but his hungry soul was not satisfied with text-books alone. At first he sought solace in the beauty of Nature. Then he discovered Ramakrishna, Vivekananda and the practice of Yoga. Ramakrishna taught him to renounce the lust for power and gold. As a young man, he resigned from the coveted Indian Civil Service and, later in life from the Congress presidentship on grounds of conscience. Vivekananda taught him the way to spiritual development. From him he also learnt that yogic exercises had to be supplemented by social service. Hence, Bose joined a 'secret group' of students who used to go to the villages to bring relief to victims of epidemics like plague, cholera and small-pox.

Bose had a rebellious and independent spirit. That was apparent from his earliest days. In 1914, he left, without the permission either of his parents or of the "group" on a long pilgrimage to holy places in northern India, in search of a *guru*. On his return, he contracted typhoid. Despite his illness, however, he managed to get a first-class in his intermediate examination and was sent to Calcutta for further studies.

In the Presidency College, Calcutta, Bose organized a students' strike to demonstrate against an English professor

who had insultingly pushed away an Indian student. For this, Bose was expelled from his college. He returned to Calcutta after a year and was allowed to join the Scottish Church College. His intellectual brilliance was undimmed and he got a first class in his B.A. examination. His father asked him to go to England in order to study and appear at the I.C.S. examination. In deference to his father's wishes, he left for England on September 15, 1919.

Some people are born to succeed, yet are never satisfied with the success that they find so easy to achieve. Bose was one of them. In September 1920, the result of the I.C.S. examination was declared and Bose stood fourth in order of merit. But he felt that his conscience would not allow him to serve the foreign rulers as a high executive official. So, he resigned from the I.C.S. and returned to India. Now, he wanted to chalk out the future course of his life. He had long discussions with Mahatma Gandhi and C. R. Das. Choosing the latter as his mentor, he settled down as Principal of the National College at Calcutta. Next year, when Gandhiji started the Non-co-operation Movement, Bose gave up his job to join it and court arrest.

In 1923 came the first parting of the ways between Bose and the Congress. For him, the issue was simple. He wanted to fight for the freedom of India on all fronts, even inside the legislatures. C. R. Das, the Congress President at the Gaya session, was also in favour of participating in the elections. Mahatma Gandhi was opposed to such a course, and it was, therefore, not accepted by the Congress. C. R. Das resigned from the presidentship and, along with Motilal Nehru, formed the Swaraj Party. Bose was appointed the editor of the party's journal *Forward*. In 1924, he became the Executive Officer of the Calcutta Corporation under the Mayorship of C. R. Das. In this capacity, Bose gained valuable

experience of planning and practical administration. He made the use of khadi compulsory for the Corporation's employees, opened an education department and organised health associations.

On release from prison, Gandhiji devoted himself to khadi work while Deshbandhu took over the command of the political campaign. Soon, the pressure exerted by the Swarajists became unbearable for the Government. On October 25, 1924, the Government struck at the Swaraj party and arrested most of its leaders, including Subhas Bose. For sometime, Bose continued to carry out his Corporation work from inside the jail, but the Government was uneasy at his presence in Calcutta and sent him, along with other Swarajist leaders to the Mandalay prison in Burma, where Tilak also had suffered six years of imprisonment earlier.

Henceforth Bose was in and out of jail repeatedly. He was imprisoned eight times, released each time for reasons of health, and went each time to Europe for treatment. Actually, he spent most of his time touring Europe extensively to mobilize public support for India's freedom. British secret service agents followed him everywhere.

In 1938, while he was still in Europe, Subhas Chandra Bose was unanimously elected as the President of the 51st session of the Indian National Congress, to be held at Haripura. His presidential address revealed him as a mature thinker as well as a man of vision and action. He opposed the proposed federation under the Government of India Act, 1935. He talked not only of freedom but also of reconstruction, of the need of planning by setting up a Planning Commission and of the gradual socialization of the entire agricultural and industrial system. He gave a plan of action for the Congress party outside office as well as inside the legislature and functioning as a government.

Bose made such an impact on the Congress that he was re-elected President in 1939, even against the wishes of Mahatma Gandhi. Bose was physically sick at that time and his presidential address was read out. In this, he urged strongly that it was the right time to give an ultimatum to the British Government for complete *swaraj*.

Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru decided that the Congress should not take unfair advantage of Britain's difficulties. It should, on the other hand, co-operate with the British Government, trusting in its sense of fairplay. The majority of Congress leaders followed Gandhi and Nehru. Bose, therefore, resigned as President and formed a new party, named the Forward Bloc, within the Congress to rally together the left wing of the party. Later, the Congress Executive Committee took disciplinary action against him. To this action, Bose reacted by saying, 'I shall cling to the Congress with even greater devotion than before. I appeal to my countrymen to come and join the Congress in their millions and to enlist as members of the Forward Bloc.'

He followed this up with a whirlwind tour of the country to organize public opinion against the war effort. As a result, he was arrested on July 2, 1940. On November 26, 1940, he went on a hunger-strike to protest against the ill-treatment of prisoners. As his condition suddenly worsened, he was released on December 5, 1940, but was kept under constant police surveillance.

On January 17, 1941, Bose made his dramatic dash to liberty which thrilled the whole country. He left his house, somehow, about midnight, took a car to Gomoh where he boarded a train and reached Peshawar. He crossed the Indo-Afghan border on foot; disguised as a Pathan, assuming the name of Ziauddin. He reached Kabul and from there went to

Russia on an Italian passport. Thereafter, Bose flew from Moscow to Berlin. It was only when his voice was heard over the Berlin radio that people knew about his whereabouts.

As soon as Japan entered the war, Subhas Chandra Bose received a call from Rash Behari Bose, the veteran revolutionary who had settled down in Japan and had organised the Indians in South-East Asia to work for India's freedom, under the Indian Independence League. Subhas left Germany in a German U-boat for Madagascar, where he was transferred to a Japanese submarine. He arrived in Tokyo, met General Tojo, the Japanese Prime Minister, and persuaded him to issue a declaration promising full independence to India in case Japan defeated Britain. Reaching Singapore, he took over the leadership of the Indian independence movement and set up a Provisional Government of Free India which was recognised immediately by Japan, Germany, Italy, Burma, Thailand, Nationalist China and the Philippines.

Thus began the most glorious chapter in the life of Subhas Bose. He displayed tremendous energy and organizational skill in recruiting, training and financing the Indian National Army. The Indian soldiers and civilians in South-East Asia at once declared their allegiance to him and began to call him 'Netaji'. He gave them the inspiring call of 'Jai Hind' and 'Dilli Chalo'.

It was with great difficulty that Bose made the Japanese agree that Indian National Army units led by Indian officers should be the first to cross the border into India. Then followed the historic advance of the newly-raised and not very well equipped Indian National Army which fought so well that it soon liberated about 200 square miles of Indian territory from the well-entrenched British forces. The Indian patriots set such illustrious examples of heroism and sacrifice

that, according to Major-General Shah Nawaz Khan of the I.N.A., the Japanese Commander-in-Chief in Burma came to Netaji Bose, bowed before him and apologized to him for doubting that the Indian soldiers were brave and patriotic.

The Indian National Army was soon beset by various difficulties, such as lack of ammunition and food, rigours of the monsoon and breakdown in communications. Meanwhile, the Japanese air cover was also withdrawn as its air force was needed to fight the Americans elsewhere. This was followed by the gradual withdrawal of the Japanese forces, as the war went badly for them. The Indian National Army, however, refused to retreat, with the result that it was surrounded and sustained heavy losses. Thousands of its soldiers were captured by the British forces. They were disarmed and three of its senior officers, Sehgal, Dhillon and Shah Nawaz—a Hindu, a Sikh and a Muslim—were court-martialled. Jawaharlal Nehru himself organized and conducted their defence. There was overwhelming popular feeling in their favour. The British rulers had ultimately to release them.

Netaji Bose left Burma for Singapore and continued his broadcasts to his fellow-countrymen from there. On August 18, 1945, he boarded a Japanese aircraft for Tokyo. The plane landed in Formosa at 2.00 p.m., and according to the Japanese, it caught fire while taking off. Netaji Bose was badly burnt, but managed to come out of the plane. He was rushed to a hospital where he died the same night.

It is amazing how much Subhas Chandra Bose was able to achieve and accomplish in his short life of 48 years. He was brilliant as a student and could have easily attained a high position of power as an I.C.S. officer. But he preferred a life of trials and tribulations as a fighter for his country's freedom. His proud and independent spirit mocked at ill-health and ill-fortune. He took exile and imprisonment in his

stride. He was a doer as well as a thinker, and a fighter who never submitted to defeat. In life he was a natural leader of men, who inspired immense devotion and loyalty. In death, he became a legend that seems destined to live for ever. People refuse to believe that Netaji Bose is dead. Perhaps they are right, for martyrs never die.